



LESSON PLAN

Sports for Social Change



RELATED FILM

A Game for Life

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Key Idea

Sports are used across the globe as a social and educational tool to promote leadership, foster role models, and support teamwork. A community youth sports program in South Africa offers positive life skills and a healthy environment for youth dialogue.

Background

This film documents a provincial soccer star in the poor neighborhood of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Nolusindiso “Titie” Plaatje works with an innovative soccer program, Grassroot Soccer, to educate local youth and mobilize communities around HIV/AIDS prevention. Soccer plays a large role in many local cultures around the world and the founders of Grassroot Soccer believe that the popularity of soccer can engage hard-to-reach young people. Their curriculum is based on a social learning theory, which includes these three core principles:

- Kids learn best from people they respect
- Learning is not a spectator sport
- It takes a village

Adolescents 10-19 years of age are especially vulnerable to HIV due to the increased risk-taking behavior characteristic to this period of life.* In 1981, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the first official report on the AIDS epidemic. The CDC also reported that, in the United States, HIV remains mainly an urban disease; the majority of individuals diagnosed with AIDS in 2011 lived in areas with 500,000 people or more. In the U.S., African Americans account for nearly half of all new infections at 44 percent and Latinos account for 19 percent of people living with HIV. Poverty also increases HIV risk due to limited access to healthcare, HIV testing, and medications. By 1994, AIDS had become the leading cause of death for all Americans ages 25-44. Since the first identification over three decades ago, almost 35 million people have been infected with the HIV virus, with sub-Saharan Africa remaining the most severely affected.** Researchers are currently working to find a vaccine.

*World Health Organization (WHO), “[10 facts on HIV/AIDS.](#)” July 2014.

**Aids.gov, “[A Timeline of AIDS.](#)”



Film: 17 minutes

Class: 60 minutes

SUBJECT AREAS

HIGH SCHOOL

- Anthropology
- Modern World Studies
- Skills for Health
- Sociology

COLLEGE

- Cultural Anthropology
- Geography
- Health Care
- History
- Sociology

THEMES

- Health education
- Sports and social change
- Youth awareness and empowerment

MATERIALS

- Online access to the film
- Equipment for showing film

PREPARATION

- None



Connections to National Standards

Common Core English Language Arts. SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1. 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 [or 11-12] topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

Next Generation Science Standards. HS-LS2-8. Evaluate the evidence for the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce.

Lesson

SETTING THE STAGE

Introduce the film by telling students that they will be watching a film about a provincial soccer star in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, who works for an innovative soccer program to educate local youth about HIV/AIDS prevention. Ask students to list some positive influences of playing sports. Can playing sports make a difference in one's life? In what ways?

ENGAGING WITH THE STORY

Direct students to note as they watch the film the influence that soccer has on Titie Plaatje's life. They should observe Titie's philosophy on life and her engagement with the kids that she teaches. Share the following core principles from Grassroots Soccer with students: Kids learn best from people they respect. Learning is not a spectator sport. And it takes a Village. How can core principles, such as these, affect behavioral change?



Delving Deeper

1. After viewing the film, lead a discussion around Grassroot Soccer's core principles, asking such questions as:
 - One Grassroot Soccer principle is that “kids learn best from people they respect.” What do you think about this statement? Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - Another Grassroot Soccer principle states, “Learning is not a spectator sport.” Do you learn better when you are directly engaged? Why?
 - “There are certain principles in my life that are based on my soccer,” says Titie. What principles do you think she is referring to? Who do you think she wants to influence? What is at stake?
 - In Port Elizabeth, South Africa, it does “take a village” to create change and awareness to prevent AIDS. Why do you think sports are good for this particular problem?
 - Titie knows that soccer can help kids stay away from “things that could destroy their lives.” How can soccer keep the kids who live in Port Elizabeth away from trouble, including theft and prostitution?
2. Divide students into groups of three to discuss the following questions. After collaborating, ask students to share their answers with the class.
 - Have you experienced any lessons associated with team sportsmanship? How can your experiences be applied off the field?
 - Can sports transform individuals? Can sports transform societies?



Reflecting and Projecting

Give students one of the following reflective writing prompts to demonstrate their understanding of the story. (Note for teachers: Just as quotes from a book or text are used to prove an analytical thought, students use the film to justify their reasoning.)

1. Titie said, “It is always important to share things with other people. And to know you can do something to help the next person—do it with all your heart and do not expect to get a reward for it.” What do you think she means by not getting a reward for your actions? (CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1)
2. Do you think sports are a good strategy to help change behavior? How can individual behavioral choices impact public health? (NGSS.HS-LS2-8)
3. In 1995, Nelson Mandela united a racially divided South Africa through the power of rugby. He said, “Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair.” What do you think about this statement? How can sports create hope? In what way did Mandela’s philosophy create hope? In what way does Titie create hope in her community? (C3.D2.Geo.5.9-12)
4. Has your thinking about the value of sports changed? If so, in what ways? (CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1)

Resources

Rob Hughes, “[Nelson Mandela Grasped the Power of Sports.](#)” *The New York Times*, June 11, 2013.

(Community website) “[Grassroot Soccer.](#)”

Santiago Halty, “[Beyond Soccer: Evolving the Game for Social Impact.](#)” *The Huffington Post*, October 10, 2013.