

AKEELAH & THE BEE (whole film to be used)

Themes for Discussion

- Diversity
- Socioeconomic status
- Family dynamic
- Underachievement

Materials needed

- DVD or Digital Copy of MOVIE (Dir. Doug Atchison, 2006)
- Equipment for showing film screen/monitor/dvd player/computer/speakers
- Paper/Journals/Writing Utensils
- Activity Descriptions/Directions
- Discussion Questions

Purpose of activity

- To promote overcoming obstacles
- To discuss family dynamics and relationships
- To discuss causes of underachievement
- To discuss empathy and support
- To discuss bias and prejudice
- To discuss the concept of mentorship

Plot summary

- “Eleven year-old Akeelah Anderson's life is not easy: her father is dead, her mom ignores her, her brother runs with the local gangbangers. She's smart, but her environment threatens to strangle her aspirations. Responding to a threat by her school's principal, Akeelah participates in a spelling bee to avoid detention for her many absences. Much to her surprise and embarrassment, she wins. Her principal asks her to seek coaching from an English professor named Dr. Larabee for the more prestigious regional bee. As the possibility of making it all the way to the Scripps National Spelling Bee looms, Akeelah could provide her community with someone to rally around and be proud of -- but only if she can overcome her insecurities and her distracting home life. She also must get past Dr. Larabee's demons, and a field of more experienced and privileged fellow spellers.”- *Written by [Shannon Patrick Sullivan <shannon@mun.ca>](mailto:shannon@mun.ca)*

Description of activity

- Use the provided template to respond to a situation or dilemma in the movie (you can choose which situation or dilemma you would like to respond to)
- Record your answers in your journal (you can write with bulleted points, create a chart, cut and paste the chart provided—it's up to you!)

Making an Inference		
What Happened?	What Does It Mean?	Why Do You Think That?
Drawing a Conclusion		
Information	Information	Information
My Conclusion:		
<p>When explaining "Why you think that," you should provide specific details, examples, and quotations to support your claims. You should also be able to explain why something matters.</p>		

(Activity reference: Dr. James, UWF)

Discussion questions

- Why do you think Akeelah was afraid to show her talents?
- Can you think of a time when you have hidden your talents or abilities? If so, why?
- Why did Akeelah face criticism from her classmates at school?
- What motivated Akeelah to want to spell even when she faced so many challenges?
- Why do you think Akeelah's mom was upset about Akeelah being with the white kids?
- Do you think she was right to be concerned? If so, why?
- What would you do in Akeelah's situation?
- Do you think her coach was helpful or hurtful? Why or why not?
- In what ways did Akeelah show empathy for others?
- How was Akeelah affected by how others around her reacted to her ability?
- Can you think of a time when the reactions, comments of others affected you?
- How do relationships play a role in your life to motivate, encourage, inspire you?

