

SCHOOL GUIDE:

## OUT OF ALEPPO



### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

BYkids School Guides help educators expand student learning from passively watching a film to active, deeply personalized learning. Three Pathways provide questions for discussion, reflection or writing prompts, plus Problem/Project-Based Learning (PBL) activities to motivate and engage students, individually, in small groups or full class(es). Alignments to English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science curriculum standards plus CASEL's five Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies are included. We encourage you to customize the activities for your students' journeys through each BYkids film's themes and content. And for more resources, see [bykids.org/for-educators](https://bykids.org/for-educators) including our *Take Action, Talk with Your Kids* and new content that is added often.

BYkids believes that lived experience and story sharing are vital to educate the whole child, preparing and inspiring global citizens who see our shared humanity. As you adapt and use our BYkids activities, please share your discoveries and ideas with us at [education@bykids.org](mailto:education@bykids.org).

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## **ABOUT THE FILM**

OUT OF ALEPPO was filmed, directed and narrated by 17-year-old Mohammad Shasho. It tells his story and the story of refugees who leave their homes to escape violence and war.

More than 11 million people have fled the war in Syria, of whom more than 1 million, including Mohammad and his family, have settled in Germany.

Mohammad's film speaks poetically—in three languages—of the loss of one's home, culture and country. Yet Mohammad and his family and friends are motivated and determined to make a better life for themselves and to contribute to the world.

The Syrian civil war is an ongoing multisided armed conflict being fought between the Ba'athist Syrian Arab Republic, led by President Bashar al-Assad, and various forces opposing both the government and each other. The unrest in Syria, part of a wider wave of the 2011 Arab Spring protests, grew out of the discontent with the Assad government.

The war in Syria has displaced more than 11 million people, creating the largest humanitarian crisis of our time.

OUT OF ALEPPO spotlights the worldwide crisis that war precipitates and the enormous challenges of resettling refugees from Syria and other areas. As Mohammad makes clear, most refugees are people who want what we all want—a peaceful, productive life with the possibility to make life better for others.

OUT OF ALEPPO reminds us all that education and empathy, not walls and war, can build a stronger, more connected world for all.

## **ABOUT MOHAMMAD'S MENTOR — ANJA BARON**

Anja Baron is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, producer and director whose work has been screened at prestigious festivals worldwide and shown on US and European television to critical acclaim, including two Emmy nominations.

In addition to her documentary work, she has also worked as a correspondent for UNICEF reporting on crises concerning women and children around the world. Her extensive travels have influenced much of her work, giving it a strong multicultural component that covers a wide range of subjects, with a focus on human rights, particularly in regard to children.

*"BYkids lends a voice to the often voiceless. BYkids empowers youth in lasting ways, all the while creating an invaluable platform for the global issues of a future generation. In turn, the viewer is not only afforded a rare glimpse into often marginalized existences but also given an opportunity to see important issues in a new light. Shining such a light on one story often shines a light on the greater whole. The results are genuinely powerful and empowering all at once." —Anja Baron*

## **ABOUT BYKIDS**

BYkids produces real-world films for kids, by kids. Talented young storytellers from around the world are paired with seasoned filmmakers to create powerful documentaries about their lives. In partnership with public television and education innovators, we share the films and their educational resources to help make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable for millions of students. Our work serves as a catalyst for change, igniting important conversations and inspiring a new generation of social activists.

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## PATHWAY 1

### HOW CAN YOU HELP OTHERS WHO FEEL LONELY?

Mohammad and others in the film talk about the loneliness of leaving one's country and living in a different country. The loneliness is profound.

#### FROM THE FILM

*"Only loneliness is your friend. Leaving your homeland is like leaving your soul."*  
— Mohammad Shasho

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Mohammad and others in the film talk about the loneliness of becoming refugees and living in a very different culture with a different language and traditions. What did you learn from the film about the actions and policies that the German government implemented to help the refugees?
- Education and school became key ways for Mohammad and others to make a new life in Germany. Why is school important? How can education help?
- Everyone experiences loneliness sometimes. How can you help others keep their feelings of loneliness manageable?

#### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

- Mohammad talks about motivation and setting a goal—of becoming a doctor and returning to Syria to help rebuild the country. Create a cartoon, skit, or other type of presentation to imagine that there is no war, Mohammad can return to Syria, and that Syria must rebuild. You will need a new government, laws, and social structures. You may want to make your presentation poignant, realistic, sad, or funny. Perform or otherwise share it with the class.
- With your group or class, make a chart or other representation of the differences between Syria and Germany. Research language, religions, customs, traditions, political systems, and any other aspects you can think of. Now, create your own solutions for accepting refugees that will make them feel less lonely. How would Germans or you and your friends feel if you were a refugee in Syria, for example? What would make you feel less lonely? If possible, develop a way to start new friendships that help assuage loneliness. Think about ways to implement your ideas in your school.

- How can you help people feel less lonely at your school? Are there people who feel they don't fit in? Are there ways you can help them feel better? Do you have to agree with a person to be their friend? Do you have to have the same culture and beliefs as someone to be their friend?
- Create an "Everybody Fits" campaign at your school. Develop posters that express all the ways people can be different and still "fit." Design activities for people to show their differences and be appreciated for those differences. Add skits, art, and fun activities that everyone can enjoy.

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## PATHWAY 2

### WHAT VALUABLE LESSONS CAN YOU LEARN FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT CULTURES, RELIGIONS AND LIFE EXPERIENCES?

Mohammad and his family and friends have learned from their hard experiences, and are also learning from the German people who have accepted them and are helping them make a new life with a new home, language and culture.

#### FROM THE FILM

*"Even if it's safe here, the war is still inside." –Mohammad's neighbor in Germany*

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- There is bias against refugees held by many people worldwide. Why would people who are otherwise kind develop a bias against helping others?
- What historical examples are you familiar with of people becoming refugees and leaving their homes? Why would people make this difficult decision?
- What parallels are there between the struggle of Syrian refugees in the film and the struggle of people from other cultures, countries or regions to become citizens of the United States?

#### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

- Research the statistics of refugees from one country, or across the world. Create a map, chart or infographic to show the areas that people flee from. Add in the numbers of people.

Next research why they flee their homes. Add an icon you design or a graphic for each reason. Analyze how the reasons or causes are the same and different. Present your infographic to the class and explain the similarities and differences in what causes people to become refugees.

- With a small group or your class, create an essay or video to share and, if you want, to send to elected officials to explain your views and also raise questions about refugees and suggest policies that can be effective in helping to solve the crisis. Your group should first identify the questions and issues that you want to address, then research and take notes about them.

Your essay or video must reflect the views of the entire group, so you will have to negotiate and compromise in order to reach agreement on the final version. Share with the class and possibly with elected officials. Monitor their responses to you, and share them with your class and school.

- With your class or small group, create a skit, work of art, music, rap, or art exhibition to show your views about refugees and to help others avoid bias against them. To start, you may want to decide on a more specific theme for the exhibit, or you may want to have each participating group or artist select their theme.

Encourage personal themes as well as historical themes and themes learned from the film, *OUT OF ALEPPO*. Each member of the class can contribute, and you can organize a performance event or night at your school. If possible, share your works with the community, perhaps by showing the film and inviting the audience to visit your classroom to experience your works.

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## PATHWAY 3

### HOW DO YOU MAKE A BIG CHANGE IN LIFE WHEN YOU HAVE TO OR NEED TO?

Mohammad misses his home country, but he is determined to keep his motivation high to make a new life. But it is difficult.

#### FROM THE FILM

*"It's like a wave—either you ride it or you fight it." –Mohammad Shasho*

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Mohammad's father was a doctor in Syria dedicated to healing all people, but he had to sometimes treat them in his own apartment. How can doctors and other people who want to help be effective if governments won't allow them to?
- Deciding to leave Syria meant that compromise and even sacrifice were necessary. Who made other sacrifices and compromises in the film? Why were there no simple decisions?
- How does Mohammad let off steam and keep his motivation and determination up in his new country?

#### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

- Mohammad performs a rap poem, and acts in a funny play in the film. Are these ways to let off steam in a healthy way? With a small group or on your own, film yourself letting off steam in a positive way. Explain why yours is a healthy or good way.
- Make a "motivation wall" in your classroom. Put words, pictures and images of anything that motivates you and your class to grow strong, keep healthy and determined, and be a good person who helps others. Be sure to take photos of your wall to save, post, and add to your school's yearbook. What can you learn from the actions and ideas that motivate you and others?
- Take your "motivation wall" to a schoolwide, community, national or international level—create a presentation to show what motivates people to act. Ask others to contribute their motivations. Share these with others. (Note: You may need to edit out sarcastic, biased, racist or extremely negative motivations submitted by people who do not share the spirit of your "motivation wall", and whose submissions might harm others.)

- Research some areas of Syrian culture that you would like to learn more about—for example, food, religion, customs and dress. With a small group, decide on one aspect and recreate it—you could bring food, dress in an appropriate style, or explain customs or religion. As a class, have a Syria Day and pretend you are Syrian. Make a list of how you felt different from being American as a result. What did you learn? Write a journal entry or short essay and share it if you wish.

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## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Dear Educator,

You and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway and Project, will implement many different standards not limited to any one content area but focused on critical and rigorous, evidence-based thinking. Below are provided some College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that appear in the majority of state PK-12 curriculum standards in ELA and Math, and in the Next Gen Science Standards, but you and your students will go beyond those limited standards. Also identified are Social Emotional Competency areas identified by CASEL, a charitable organization that has helped to lead the way in defining and evaluating social emotional learning. We hope you will share your experiences and ideas at [BYkids.org](http://BYkids.org).

### PATHWAY 1

#### ELA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

- CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
- CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.
- CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.
- CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.
- CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.
- CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCRA.W.10 Write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

## **PATHWAY 2**

### **ELA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS**

- CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
- CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.
- CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.
- CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.
- CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.
- CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

### **STANDARDS OF MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE**

- MP1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- MP5 Use appropriate tools strategically

MP6 Attend to precision

MP7 Look for and make use of structure

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

### **NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

SEP 2 Develop and use models

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data

SEP 5 Use mathematics and computational thinking

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

## **PATHWAY 3**

### **ELA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS**

- CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
- CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.
- CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.
- CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.
- CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

### **NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

- SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information