



# The In- Between



## Cast and Crew

The In-Between by Marcus Youssef

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# Quebec Education Competencies

Some select Quebec Competencies found in this guide include:

## English Language Arts

Uses language to communicate and learn

Represents her/his literacy in different media

Reads and listens to written, spoken, and media texts

Writes a variety of genres for personal and social purposes

## Cross-Curricular Competencies

Uses information

Exercises critical judgment

Uses creativity

Uses information and communications technologies

Cooperates with others

## An Introduction to *The In-Between*

*The In-Between* is inspired by the real life story of Ahmed Mohamed, who as a 14yr old was arrested at school for having pieces of a clock in his backpack, which authorities assumed were items to build a bomb. He was arrested based on discrimination, racial profiling, and Islamophobia.

Discuss Ahmed's story with your class to help prepare them for seeing *The In-Between*.

Some resources:

[Ahmed Mohamed: Texas police knew he didn't have a bomb but arrested him anyway](#)

['They thought it was a bomb': 9th-grader arrested after bringing a home-built clock to school](#)

Questions to help prompt discussion:

- » Who is Ahmed Mohamed?
- » Was he discriminated against? Please elaborate.
- » What can we do to reduce discrimination? Please list some examples
- » How do you think this event changed Ahmed's life?
- » How do you think he must have felt to be discriminated against?
- » Where is Ahmed now?

When the discussion is complete, ask students to write a personal essay about discrimination; a time when they were discriminated against or a time when they discriminated.

Other areas for them to focus on:

- Why were they discriminated against (or why did they discriminate)?
- Is discrimination just?
- Where does discrimination come from?
- Does everyone discriminate? Why or why not?

Ask students to research other instances where students have been discriminated against. They will then select one student's story to further research and to write a short paper outlining the student's story, including why they were discriminated against and how it affected the student (especially how it affected their future).

### Alternate Activity: More Student Discrimination

## **The In-Between – Cross-Curricular Themes and Concepts**

Below is a list of themes and concepts from *The In-Between*. Discuss the themes/concepts and their definitions with your class before attending *The In-Between*.

Discrimination	Diversity
Personal Politics	Decision-Making
Immigration	Stereotypes
Refugees	Online Media Literacy

Some questions to help with the discussion:

- » What is the meaning of the following word? (Do your research!)
- » Do you agree with that meaning or is it outdated?
- » Can you think of an example of it?
- » A lot of these terms interrelate, can you provide an example of some that interrelate and how?

To further enhance your students understanding of the themes/ concepts in *The In-Between*, ask each student to write a short essay (2 – 3 pages) on a theme/concept of their choosing. Their paragraph should focus on a brief explanation of what the theme/concept means and also explain why they chose this particular theme/concept and how it is relevant or of interest to them.

### **Alternate Activity - Introduction to the Themes**

Write each of the following themes on separate pieces of paper and place them in a bag. In pairs, students will randomly pull a theme from the bag and will design their own assignment based on the theme and how it is relevant to their lives in 2018. For example, if a pair selects refugees, they may want to look into the Lacolle border situation, or perhaps for discrimination students may want to come up with a creative project that focuses on how female students are sent home from school if their tank top straps are too thin . How does the theme affect their lives? How can they improve (or worsen) the situation? What ideas can be shared?

Discrimination	Diversity
Personal Politics	Decision-Making
Immigration	Stereotypes
Refugees	Online Media Literacy

## ***The In-Between* – What Does it Mean?**

After seeing *The In-Between*, discuss the play with your class.

Some questions to help prompt discussion:

- » Did they enjoy the play?
- » What was the general feeling of the play?
- » Who was their favourite character? Why?
- » Did they have a favourite or least favourite scene? Why?
- » What types of reactions did you have to the play? Did it seem realistic?
- » Did any scenes or moments in the play stand out? Why or why not?

With their initial impressions of the play explored, move the discussion a bit deeper.

Questions to ask:

- » What was *The In-Between* about? Describe.
- » What was the main concept or point of *The In-Between*? Explain.
- » Can you relate to the concept of *The In-Between*?
- » Can you relate with Lily? Why or why not?
- » Can you relate with Brit? Why or why not?
- » Can you relate to Karim? Why or why not?
- » Did *The In-Between* seem like a believable real-life story to you? Why or why not?
- » Lily refers to herself as being 'in-between' what does she mean by that?
- » What does the title *The In-Between* mean?

When the discussion is complete ask your students to write an analytical piece exploring what the title *The In-Between* means. What does it mean in relation to the story? Is there more than one meaning for the play title? Analyze and explain.

## Relationship Analysis

In *The In-Between*, there are three main relationships:

- Brit and Lily
- Lily and Karim
- Brit and Karim

**Brit and Lily** have an interesting dynamic and relationship – two very different girls who come from very different homes and life experiences.

**Lily and Karim** are still getting to know each other in a more than platonic way but they ‘get’ each other and some of the experiences that life has thrown at them.

**Brit and Karim** -well, they may never truly be friends but for Lily's sake they're trying.

As a class, discuss these relationships.

Some questions to help prompt the discussion:

- » Describe Lily and Brit's relationship when we first meet them.
- » Why are they friends? What makes them friends?
- » Describe Lily and Brit's relationship as it evolves during *The In-Between*. Are they still friends?
- » Describe the dynamic between Lily and Brit. What makes their relationship work?
- » How has their relationship changed? Explain.
- » What types of big decisions come with or are as a result of the change in their relationship? (Ex. Lily having to decide between Brit and Karim, Brit and Karim trying to get along for Lily's sake)

Repeat the same questions for Lily and Karim and again for Brit and Karim.

Once the discussion is complete, ask students to choose one pair and to write an analysis of their relationship. Their analysis should also include short character analyses..

### Extension Activity: The Time Lily Went to Brit's House

In *The In-Between*, Brit mentions that Lily was the only friend of hers who went to her house and actually stayed the whole time. That's when they became friends. What do you think that first experience was like? Was Brit nervous and afraid that another almost friend would leave only to never return? What did Lily think when she went to Brit's? Why didn't Brit's mom scare her off?

Using your imagination, write a short story about the time that Lily went to Brit's house and stayed.



## Stereotypes and Perceptions

*The In-Between* uses stereotypes to bring attention to the fact that perception is not necessarily reality. Brit thinking that Karim has a bomb in his backpack is an example of this.

As a class discuss stereotypes and perceptions:

- » What are stereotypes?
- » Do we need stereotypes? Why or why not?
- » Do stereotypes play a part in how we perceive others? Explain.
- » Are stereotypes and perceptions necessary for society?
- » Is perception reality?
- » In *The In-Between* there are instances of stereotypes and perception not equating to the reality of the situation. Can you list any? (Ex. Brit and the 'bomb', Karim treated like a terrorist, Brit thinking Bennie isn't a racist because it's just 'white pride', etc. . . .)
- » Why is Karim treated like a terrorist and/or foreigner but not Lily?
- » Have you ever been perceived incorrectly? How did you handle it?

When the discussion is complete, ask students to research instances in real life where stereotypes affected perception. Each student will write up a summary of the instance, how it affected the person (or people) and offer some suggestions on how to reduce inaccurate perceptions based on stereotypes.

### Extension Activity: My Perception

Using any type of creative writing genre of your choice, write about an instance where you misperceived someone based on a stereotype. How did you deal with the situation? Were you able to learn from the situation? If so, what did you learn? How can you assist others in not being misperceived due to stereotypes?

# Challenging Public Perceptions

Continuing with the theme of perceptions, discuss public perceptions with your students.

Some questions to help prompt discussion:

- » Can perceptions be changed? How?
- » How can we challenge public perceptions?
- » By challenging public perceptions, can we reduce unjust discrimination?
- » Have you ever been perceived incorrectly? How did you deal with it?
- » What can you do to assist others in not being perceived incorrectly?
- » What part do the media play, if at all, in how we perceive others?
- » How can the media assist in changing perceptions?

In small groups, students will come up with a communications plan for either: a newspaper, tv news channel, or media-owned website, that is looking to become more open and less reliant on stereotypes. In other words, they are looking to become more open-minded and inclusive, therefore students will come up with a plan for them to do so. By becoming more open-minded and inclusive they will be able to challenge public perceptions.

Their plan should include the following:

- A brief description of the current state of the newspaper, tv channel or media site that they have chosen (they can choose a real station or make one up).
- Goals and objectives of the plan
- The audience
- The plan
- How the plan will be implemented
- Challenges of the plan
- Challenges of the goal of changing public perceptions

Their final project should consist of their pitch (in written form) to the organization and to include as many visuals as possible to help demonstrate and promote their plan. If time permits, have each group present their pitch to the class. You can take it one step further by asking students to vote on which pitch they like most and that they think will be most successful.

## Refugee Experience in Canada

*... Before the refugee kids came there were only a few Middle Easterners in the school. Then all of a sudden the school had a bunch of people who look like me. Hanging out and speaking Arabic in the halls.*

Karim

As a class or individually, ask your students to research refugees, specifically as they relate to Canada.

Some areas and questions for students to focus on:

- » What is immigration?
- » What are some of the reasons that people immigrate (i.e. leave their country for another)?
- » What is a refugee?
- » Is there a difference between immigration and refugees? Explain.
- » What is a refugee camp?
- » Identify a few refugee camps – where are they in the world? Which are biggest? Why?
- » What factors are at play when people become refugees?
- » Why do people leave their home countries?
- » Describe Canada's immigration and refugee program.
- » What are the facts about Canada's refugee program?
- » Is it a success? Why or why not?
- » Describe the situation at the Lacolle border in Quebec. What is causing this influx?
- » What can Canada do?
- » Real stories about refugees immigrating to Canada (ex. Peace by Chocolate)
- » What kinds of barriers do refugees face?
- » Do they know anyone who is a refugee or immigrant to Canada?

Students will then write a paper about what they learnt about refugees in Canada. What is it like for a refugee to come to Canada? Why do so many people want to immigrate to Canada? What kinds of barriers do refugees face? Encourage your students to interview a new immigrant to Canada, a refugee (new to Canada or not) to learn more about their experiences.

Students must use real facts from legitimate and credible resources for their paper. Their objective is to analyze the situation based on real facts and not rhetoric or factually incorrect stories.

# Memes and Media Literacy

Memes are prevalent in today's online society, but how do we know if they're real or fake?

Discuss media literacy with your students.

Some resources:

[Media Literacy Lesson Plans](#)

[Teaching Media Education](#)

[Media Literacy](#)

[15 Resources for Teaching Media Literacy](#)

[Tackling Fake News](#)

Once students have a more thorough understanding of media literacy, discuss memes with them. Some questions:

- » What is a meme?
- » What is the goal or objective of a meme?
- » How can you tell if a meme is factual or not?
- » What are characteristics of a meme?
- » What are the consequences of fictional memes going viral?
- » How can we counter the spread of fictional memes going viral?
- » What types of experiences have you had with memes?
- » Have you ever fell for a fake meme? Do you remember what it was?
- » If yes, what made it seem real to you?
- » How did you find out it was fake?

When the discussion is complete, students will now create their own memes but there's a catch!

Privately assign each student the task of creating a fake or real meme. For this activity to work, students must keep private what they have been assigned.

Students will then each create a meme based on *The In-Between* and one of its associated themes. If they were assigned 'fake' they will make a fake meme and so on if they were assigned 'real'. When they are done, each meme will be shown to the class and students will have to determine if the meme is real or fake. The student, who gets the most right, wins!

## Extension Activity: My Media Consumption

Now that students have a more thorough understanding of media literacy, will it change their media consumption habits? How?

Ask each student to detail if and how their media consumption will change

## Diversity is Our Strength

*I get this feeling sometimes.  
Like I'm always in the middle.  
Like there's two parts of me but I'm not one or the other.  
(beat)  
I'm Canadian.  
Lily*

Discuss diversity in Canada with your students.  
Some questions to help prompt discussion:

- » What is diversity?
- » Does it help with inclusion? Explain.
- » How would you describe the state of diversity in Canada today? Provide examples.
- » Do you think we are a tolerant and accepting society? Elaborate.
- » Do you think all minority groups in Canada feel accepted? Please provide examples.
- » What can we do to improve diversity in our society?
- » What can we do to improve diversity In our country?
- » Which is better: a melting pot or a mosaic? Why?
- » Is Canada a melting pot or a mosaic? Explain.
- » Is diversity our strength? Explain.

When the discussion is complete, ask students to write an analytical essay answering the following question: Is diversity our strength in Canada? They must include credible references to back up their point of view.

### Extension Activity: Toxic Discussions

What is a toxic discussion? What causes the toxicity? How did we get to this point? How can we change a toxic discussion into a productive discussion?

Discuss and explore those four questions with your class. When the discussion is complete, each student will write their own personal essay focussing on the four questions.

## What's Your Politics?

*If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.*

Modern Proverb

Write that modern proverb on your white or blackboard and discuss its meaning with your class.

Some questions to help prompt discussion:

- » What does the proverb mean?
- » Why is it important to stand for something?
- » Have you ever stood for something?
- » What are your personal politics?
- » What do you believe in?

When the discussion is complete, ask students to write a paper that explores their personal politics and what they are willing to stand for. What happens if we don't stand for anything? What happens to society then? Ask students to use real examples, throughout history, where this had consequences. How can we ensure that the past does not repeat itself?