



GAME

Writer/Director: Jeannie Donohoe

Country: USA

Run time: 16 minutes

Language: English



In this lesson

1. **Before you watch** - Keywords for understanding a short film (5-10 mins)
 2. **Watch!** - Watch the short film *Game* (16 mins)
 3. **Discuss and Reflect** - Questions about the film and activities (15-45 mins)
 - a. Reflect on Story
 - b. Discuss Characters + Activity: Letter writing
 - c. Learn more about Film + behind the scenes video
 - d. Final thoughts
 4. **Hear from the filmmaker** - An Interview with the director of *Game* (5 mins)
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*Please note that this film contains a brief instance of strong language

To personalize this lesson for your students, go to **File>Make a Copy**. You can then edit your own version of this file as you wish.

1. BEFORE YOU WATCH

Key Words - Try to guess the meaning of each keyword before reading it.

LIVE-ACTION FILM - Film is another word for movie. A Live-Action film is made with real people and actors, as opposed to animation or cartoons.

SHORT FILM - A short film is just like the movies you watch at home or at a theater, but shorter.

FILMMAKER - Just as the art in a museum is made by an artist, a film is made by a filmmaker or a team of filmmakers. A filmmaker has something they want to say and they make films to share their stories with you, the viewer.

FICTION - A story that is made-up or make-believe. This film is **REALISTIC FICTION**.

Everything in the film *could* happen in real life, but we are watching **ACTORS** act out a story.

PROTAGONIST - The main character in a story or film

ANTAGONIST - The character in a story who opposes the protagonist or causes trouble. Sometimes described as the *bad-guy* or a villain.

CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION - The conflict is the problem that the characters face and the resolution is the way that the problem is solved.

CREDITS - After the film ends, the credits list the names of the actors as well as the people who made the film and what job they had.

2. WATCH!

Below is a link to watch the short film, **GAME** on Vimeo. The film is about 16 minutes long. It has sound so make sure to plug in your headphones or turn the volume up. After you watch the film, come back to this page to learn more about the film and the filmmaker.

Link to view film: <https://vimeo.com/191569351>



3. DISCUSS & REFLECT

Name:

a. REFLECT

Did you like this film? What did you like or not like about it?

Could you relate to the main character, AJ?

Have you ever wanted to take part in something but felt like you didn't belong? What was your experience and how did you handle it?

What causes AJ to try out for the boys team?

What is the conflict AJ encounters during tryouts?

What do you think about what AJ did?

What is the conflict for the coach? How do you think he made his decision?

Do you agree or disagree with the coach's final decision? Why?

A work of art is made by someone who has something they want to say.
What do you think the filmmaker wanted to say with this story?

b. CHARACTERS

The characters in the film are played by ACTORS.

The actors are acting out a SCRIPT that was written by the filmmaker.

Who is the **PROTAGONIST**?

Who is the **ANTAGONIST**?

Why do you think Collins treats AJ the way he does?

Why do you think the filmmaker decided to include Collins in the story?

At 7:28, we see the Coach's daughter visit him at practice. Why do you think the filmmaker decided to include the Coach's daughter? What does it tell us about the Coach? Does it help us understand the decision he makes at the end of the film?

ACTIVITY: WRITE A LETTER

Choose two characters from this list: **AJ, Collins, Coach** (other options; Coach's daughter, AJ's dad)

Write a letter from one character to another.

In your letter consider what you think the character would have to say to the other. Are they explaining their perspective? Do they have something to apologize for?

c. LEARN ABOUT FILM - Watch the Credits

Reading the credits of a film is a great way to learn more about filmmaking and how a film was made. While some short films are made by just one or two people, this film had a large crew of people doing different jobs.

Watch and read the credits, pick a few roles and research what it is that they do.

Examples: Set Dresser, Stunt Coordinator, Boom Operator, Gaffer

Once you know what the job entails, think about what their job must have been like on this film. What is it like to be a set dresser on a basketball film? What were the stunts that had to be coordinated?

Check out this behind-the-scenes video to see what it was like on the set of *GAME*

<https://vimeo.com/244088444>

Bonus!

Watch a second, very short film: [SUPERPERSON](#)

Both films reveal that the PROTAGONIST is not who they appeared to be. Have you ever made an assumption about a person based on their appearance that proved to be incorrect? Write a journal entry about what happened. Who was the person? What did you assume and why? How were you proven wrong? What did you learn from the experience? What might you do differently in the future?

d. Final Thoughts

What did the film make you think about? How did it make you feel? Share anything you want to say or any questions you have about the film here.

You are welcome to email questions to education@nyicff.org and we will try our best to respond with answers! We'd also love to see your drawings and photos!

4. Hear from the filmmaker - An Interview with

Jeannie Donohoe, director of **Game**. (Interview edited from borrowingtape.com)



Who or what motivated you to pursue filmmaking?

I studied art in college and shot a lot of photography, so I've been interested in visual art and narratives for a long time. After graduating... I taught middle school in the South Bronx for four years. I felt creatively inspired by the experiences I was having personally and in working with young people. I would also spend my little free time watching films -- art house, foreign, indie, classics -- in the amazing independent theaters of New York. I decided I wanted to go to film school to learn more about visual storytelling, and I earned my MFA from Columbia in directing and writing. I made two thesis films there: one about a teacher and student (*Public*) and another about a woman who travels to rural Ireland to track down her father (*Lambing Season*).

How does your film primarily differentiate or distinguish itself from other work?

I watched a lot of sports films when preparing to make **Game**. I love the genre of sports movies, but there were certain things I knew I wanted to do with this film. I wanted the shooting style to be naturalistic, from lighting to camera choices, and especially in the actual basketball play. It was a top priority for me to cast all real basketball players. I didn't want to cheat shots, use body doubles, or be limited in what I could show. I also realized when watching reference films that there are very few sports movies made by women. Beyond the basketball plot, *Game* is a story about gender inequality. It's my hope that people get drawn into thinking they're watching a story about basketball tryouts, and ultimately realize that it has this other thematic layer.

What's some of the best advice you've received?

Write from the heart and tell the story only you can tell.

Full interview here:

<https://borrowingtape.com/interviews/game-5-questions-director-jeannie-donohoe>

To learn more about the **New York International Children's Film Festival**, visit our website: nyicff.org, and find more streamable films on our [blog](#).

To receive updates from our education department, including new Film Ed From Home resources, sign up for our mailing list [here](#). Questions? Feedback? Email jessica@nyicff.org

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