

LCL! PART TWO  
**Color as Metaphor**  
***AKEELAH AND THE BEE***  
Teacher Notes

*Stop the film whenever and however many times you would like to discuss the color metaphors throughout. Some suggested times are listed; however, as students become more attuned to the color metaphors, expect that they will ask you to stop the film so that they might comment and might even shout out their observations in excitement, as their awareness increases. 😊*

Sequence 1

**Notice** the predominant color: BLUE (discomfort, sadness)

**Notice** what color students are wearing: Blue or white (a bluish hue is added)

**Notice** color of the walls: BLUE

Accent color on chairs, desks: BLUE

**STOP THE FILM. Discuss the above.**

**Ask students to predict:** "When in the film does it change from the blue?"

Sequence 2

Akeelah is in her room, after the dinner sequence, looking at her father's picture and there is a flashback: warm colors (comfort, love)

Cool colors = sadness

Warm colors = happiness

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above and how the mood of a sequence can be affected by the colors (Dramatic aspect of film).**

Sequence 3

Note that at school there is an occasional red. Ask students why this might be. Red usually implies "Uh, oh. Watch out. Danger." Foreshadowing?

Akeelah's backpack has a pinkish tint to it on the back center and is not as bright as the other reds. Why? Might it be an alert for trouble ahead?

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 4

A bit brighter, a bit more color after the spelling bee with her friend while walking home. Then she wakes up to her brother and there are bright and muted colors behind on the wall

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 5

After agreeing to be in the bee and meeting with the principal, she watches the tape of the National Bee on TV. She wears blue, but there is an afghan on the sofa behind her that is yellow, green, red, pink, silver.

On TV, players show their yellow number cards

Her other brother shows up wearing RED...uh oh...trouble.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 6

Dr. Larabee's house has blue trim!

He wears blue and there are blue morning glory flowers.

The garden patch is colorful. Why? HOPE?

After Akeelah says, "I'm sorry to be so insolent" and leaves, Dr. Larabee holds up a glass to take a drink. PAUSE THE FILM and note the sunflowers. Why?

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 7

When Akeelah is home with the dictionary, she has marked the pages with colorful post-its.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 8

When her sister and the baby leave for the Beverly Hills bee, there is blue, white, yellow, red.

Akeelah is wearing PINK!!! The first time she wears another color since the film began. (Pink and brown with orange flower)

The crowd wears blue with some red, yellow, and brown.

The registration woman has red hair. Is this intentional casting?

Javier wears red, blue, brown (red tie). When he first speaks to Akeelah ("My name's Javier"), the Two kids behind them are in orange and coral.

Dylan wears black

After Akeelah gets her first word correct and returns to her seat, she and Javier tap fists. Note lots of pink behind her.

Saying good-bye to Javier, there are blues. Why?

The ride home with the principal: Note how red the flower looks on her shirt and her sister's top. Is it a warning of what's to come? An alert?

Note her brother's and mother's clothes are blue.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 9

Colors on the bus ride and outside are a bit warmer as well as cold colors combined: reds, lots of brown, pink orange, soft yellow.

Dylan's test tubes have colors in them: yellows, greens, oranges as "trims." These are not the main colors, although the brown wall has touches of color.

Playing the spelling game on the basketball court is the first time that we see entire shirts of color: green, as well as a pink hat on the other girl.

A wide shot shows a beautiful bright blue sky.

As Akeelah and Javier walk toward the curb, the boy in background, between them, wears bright yellow. (warmth between the two characters?)

Akeela's backpack is a brighter red.

"Need a ride?" Note all the red in the background: warning? Alert?  
Bus ride home...BLUES!!!!  
Home and Mom...BLUES!!!!

In her room, around her computer and her Dad's picture, it is colorful (including colorful letters of the alphabet). What does this indicate?

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 10

Akeelah goes to Dr. Larabee and her top has blue flowers on white.  
In his house, the same warm browns as seen with her father's picture!!!!  
Books on the shelf are colorful. What does this say about knowledge?

There is a strong light on their faces on the right side (left screen).  
She reads the quote and this reaction shot has Dr. Larabee basked in the bright light on his shoulders, forehead, face.  
The light gets brighter on the side of her face, as well.  
When she finishes, light is all around her in the background.  
When she holds out her hand in agreement to move forward, there is light POURING in from the window.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 11

Javier's birthday party enjoys bright sunshine.  
The neighborhood and inside the car there are warm browns.  
Akeelah's sister and Georgia wear warm pink, salmon, rust colors.  
At Javier's house there is a colorful banner and a yellow, gold "rainbow arc" of balloons.

Akeelah wears a white top with a sunshiny-looking pattern of blues, yellows, golds and pale yellow trim with pale yellow slacks.

At Javier's house, the guests and gifts are colorful, yet there is blue. Might this show she is not totally comfortable here?

Javier's dad's study shows warm colors with bright light coming through the windows.

The picture of Javier and his Dad is BLUE!!! Why? Could it convey her feelings of sadness as she looks at it and thinks of her own father?

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 12

The coaching session with Dr. Larabee shows both wearing pale yellow shirts with pale blue shielding their "hearts."

The huge book is RED. Might this be showing an obstacle and indicating a roadblock ahead?

Sunlight streaming in the window.

As Dr. Larabee speaks into a handheld recorder, there are reflections of BLUE in his warm study.

Akeelah by herself at the computer shows the screen maintaining a blue glow although the room has a warmer feel.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 13

When together in the garden, Akeelah wears orange at her "heart" with blue on the sleeves. Dr. Larabee wears a light blue shirt.

**Transitioning from this montage**, Akeelah comes through a warm-colored kitchen into a blue living room.

Akeelah walks into the living room with a BLUE book and blue flowery top.

**When her mother coughs, PAUSE THE FILM** so students can see that behind Akeelah on the wall is a colorful framed sentence that says, "Love spoken here."

Note: Light is on Akeelah's face and not on her mother's face.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 14

Akeelah is in the garden with Dr. Larabee who is putting weeds in a garbage bin. He wears a salmon-colored hooded sweatshirt and a white T-shirt, tan pants. There is no blue. She is wearing a top with pink and yellow flowers and blue denim overalls and a salmon pony tail holder with the blue ponytail holder in her braids.

The garage, **where his sad past is stored**, is bordered in blue!

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 15

Akeelah jumps rope and wears a floral top with pink flowers.  
Dr. Larabee wears a mostly pale yellow top.

Montage: Daisies are in the foreground while Dr. Larabee turns the rope. He wears a bright white sweatshirt and Akeelah wears a bright solid salmon top.

The beautiful sunset and silhouette show the sun and warmth in the background.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 16

Regional Spelling Bee has a red curtain lining the stage: Uh oh. Watch out!

Akeelah is dressed in pink and green, while others are in blue or white tinged with blue. A few are in red: uh oh.  
Lights shine on faces.

When Javier first approaches the microphone, **PAUSE THE FILM** at Javier's Point of View shot when he looks to the door. Note the screen has a blue border at the top and a deep blue diagonal ray of light at the lower right. The blue borders the brightly lit door and hints at sadness; something is a bit off...not right.

Next time we see this shot, the top blue is gone and only the diagonal is there. When Akeelah comes through the door, the ray of blue is just about gone.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 17

At the school, Akeelah wears blue with yellow flowers. There is red in the corner of the blown-up front page behind her.

Note that Georgia's earrings are RED and only seen when the principal takes Akeelah away after Georgia's told about dinner with Javier's family.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 18

While Dr. Larabee watches Akeelah on television, **PAUSE THE FILM**. Note the reflections of BLUE light on and behind him, as well as one patch of RED. Also note that he wears a warm tan top.

In the photo of his daughter, note RED shoes, while he wears a BLUE shirt and tie. He puts the picture facedown into the drawer and RED paper totally covers it. A BLUE stripe of light reflects onto the back of his chair.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

#### Sequence 19

When Dr. Larabee next meets with Akeelah, note the four blue vases with flowers and the stained glass, giving the appearance of yellow flowers coming out of the vases. What might it mean? (*Maybe she now sees Dr. Larabee as the enlightened one whom she reveres.*) When Akeelah pleads with him to continue to coach her, he moves away from that background to a clouded window.

Dr. Larabee wears a deep brown vest showing feelings of warmth and caring toward Akeelah. She wears a colorful floral top with a blue jacket over it. Word boxes are yellow.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 20

Akeelah is on the phone. There is a colorful bulletin board behind her and yellow word boxes in front, which act as a frame around Akeelah.

When she enters the living room where her mom and sister are watching TV, there are spots of red in various places, including on top of the TV set. The TV segments have a blue tint. Is Akeelah still feeling sad about where she lives?

The reaction shot shows a candle sconce behind Akeelah, on her shoulder: Enlightenment.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 21

**PAUSE THE FILM** when Akeelah's mother comforts her, to show the pink hearts in the background between them.

When the mom is with Dr. Larabee, note the stripe of blue behind Mom in close-up. Note the lamp in the background: Two lights point in different directions as if metaphorically saying that each character has a unique viewpoint and sees the situation differently.

Note the warmth of the sequence - the warm colors and the soft lights framing each of them. Only the collar and top button of Dr. Larabee's blue shirt can be seen; most is covered by a warm tan sweater.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 22

The mother walks through the hall into the living room: BLUE!  
As she sees Akeelah, the warm brown wall takes up more of the frame  
The warm colors in the living room surround Akeelah, but her shirt is pale BLUE.

Mom and Akeelah are on the sofa. Note the pink heart PJ bottoms and the accent of the bright light between them.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**



### Sequence 23

After mom's heart-to-heart, when Akeelah walks on the sidewalk in her community, it is colorful with bright sunshine. Her brother has stripes of red, rather than solid red top.

Notice Derrick T's car. It has a slight stripe of red...Or is it a warmer salmon color?

Derrick T wears a salmon-colored shirt. Relays warmth and a message to the audience: "No need to worry."

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 24

Dr. Larabee is in his garden. He wears a light blue shirt and is hunched over toward and framed by colorful flowers.

Akeelah places yellow boxes in the foreground and there are more "sunshine" frames of Dr. Larabee. When he turns to Akeelah, note there are all warm colors. When Dr. Larabee stands with the jumprope, note the prickly plants. There is no color of the garden until he sits down and Akeelah comes over. Then there are a few pale flowers in front of them and finally pink flowers at the lower left.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 25

There are bright and sunny sequences: At Georgia's house, on the plane, in Washington, D.C.

On the plane, Javier and Akeelah wear some blue...nervous about the bee? Anticipating possibly losing?

Georgia wears pinks, a fun fur, as if to say this trip is all fun and risk-free for her. Note how comfortable she is now: Akeelah has opened new worlds for her.

At the party in the hotel room, Mom and Georgia are in pink. Javier and Akeelah wear blue. Note the difference with Dylan's father wearing blue. Dylan wears blue. The room is a pale salmon, indicating warmth between him and his father, but not as warm and rich as the settings with Akeelah and Dr. Larabee and her mom.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

### Sequence 26

Participants at the National Bee wear yellow signs over white shirts.

The 12<sup>th</sup> round shows LOTS of light at its start.

At Javier's turn, the blue sign is all around him with two red stars in the background. Might this be foreshadowing his missing the word?

When Akeelah overhears Dylan's father and then peeks in on them, they are surrounded by blue. When Dr. Larabee "catches her," he is surrounded by red: uh oh...caught.

When Akeelah says, "No matter what happens..." and foreshadows her "throwing" the Bee, there is red in the background.

**STOP THE FILM...Discuss the above.**

**Then continue the film until the end.**

Discuss the amount of pre-production work that went into the effective use of color as a metaphor in this film...WHEW!!!!