



5 Girls

Film Study Guide

Director: Maria Finitzo

2001 | Documentary | 113 Minutes | USA | English | Unrated

<https://kartemquin.com/films/5-girls>

Synopsis: The world is full of smart, resilient girls, but we don't often hear about them. From Maria Finitzo and the production company that made *Hoop Dreams*, *5 Girls* shows girls as the heroes of their own lives. Shot over the course of three years the documentary tracks the lives of Aisha, Corrie, Haibinh and Toby as they move through their tumultuous teenage years. With Chicago as its backdrop, everything from hairstyles to first loves to poverty and dealing with being an immigrant comes to the forefront in this tightly woven story.

Post-Screening Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be successful?
2. How can one become "a success"?
3. What kind of success can be seen and what kinds of success can be seen and what kinds of success are harder to see?

4. What are the struggles, problems and challenges facing teenage girls today?
5. What does it mean to be feminine?
6. What does it mean to be a “good” girl?
7. What role do adults play on girls’ lives?
8. How do relationships with fathers or mother vary?
9. What do the girls accomplish during the two years they are filmed?
10. How do the girls experience and define success differently within the different parameters of their lives?
11. What are the most visible struggles/challenges of the girls? What are the most important positive qualities/strengths?
12. Discuss the girl’s relationships with the adults in their lives and the messages they receive about how to resist or respond to the challenges they face.
13. Are their relationships with fathers different from those with mothers, and if so, how?