



WORK IT, GIRL: RULE THE MUSIC SCENE LIKE QUEEN BEYONCÉ KNOWLES - TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Learning Objective

As a shy child, Beyoncé Knowles was encouraged by her parents to try new things despite her nervousness. After excelling in dance class, she went on to audition and join a girl singing group that eventually become the successful trio Destiny's Child. She eventually became a successful solo performer, actress, producer, feminist, and activist, empowering others to believe in their abilities to change the world. This addition to the Work It, Girl series shares Beyoncé's story, one that will inspire students to reach for their dreams and make a difference in the world. The book features ten essential lessons from Beyoncé's life that emphasize the values of hard work, practice, finding your voice and using it to stand up for others. Complete with striking paper cut style illustrations, this book encourages students to dream big, work hard, and make their dreams come true!

Essential Questions in This Unit

1. Why is Beyoncé Knowles famous?
2. How did Beyoncé go from being shy to being in the spotlight?
3. Who were Beyoncé's champions as a young girl?
4. What activities did Beyoncé have to give up so that she could spend time practicing her skills in order to be successful?
5. How and why did Beyoncé put out messages of female empowerment, feminism, and independence?
6. Even though Beyoncé is a very private person, how did she start to see the benefit of sharing her true beliefs with the world?



Classroom Discussion Topics

1. When her mother asked her about joining a dance class, Beyoncé wondered if she should “try something new and possibly fail or embarrass herself? Or stay safe in her comfort zone?” Ask the students if she made the right choice? Would they have done the same? Do they understand why she was conflicted?
2. At first, Girls Tyme worked hard without much success: “This was not overnight stardom. It was a lot of hard work and not very much payoff.” Ask the class what characteristics Beyoncé had that made her stay motivated and tackle the hard work that made her famous. Would they be able to give up so much and work so hard to achieve their dreams?
3. When she was young Beyoncé wanted to be a star. When she was 26 she said “I want to be an icon.” Later she told an interviewer “I want to be a legend.” Ask the students if they think it is important that Beyoncé named her goals. Did it make her work harder because she said her goals out loud? Ask them to share what their own personal goals are. Do they think once they achieve their personal goal(s) they’ll be satisfied, or will they end up making new, even harder goals for themselves?
4. When Philando Castile, a Black man, was killed by a white police officer during a traffic stop, Beyoncé felt it was time to use her voice to help change the world. Ask the class to talk about the different ways Beyoncé has used her fame and her career to weigh in on important issues, like racism and feminism. What issues would make students take a stand? How can kids make a difference in the world?

Student Activities

1. When Beyoncé wanted to keep her public and private lives separate, she created an alter ego: Sasha Fierce! Have the class split into groups of five and ask them to dream up an alter ego to represent the group’s values. What would their personality be like? What characteristics would they have? What new creative projects would they bring to the world? Come back together as a class and have them take turns sharing their creations.



2. Have students choose one of the key lessons from Beyoncé’s life and make a poster illustrating it. Decorate the classroom with these inspiring messages!
3. Ask the class to think about famous people they admire--performers, actors, politicians or sports figures—who have used their fame as platforms for larger activism. Have students choose one of these people and write a description of the person, their activism, and why the student looks up to them. They can even illustrate their work with a paper cut portrait like those in the book!
4. This quote from Beyoncé is included in the book: “It’s easy to hear the voices of others and often very difficult to hear your own. Every person you meet is going to want something different from you. The question is: What do you want for yourself?” Ask students to think about their answer to this question. Using “A Day in the Life of Beyoncé” as an example, have them draw or write about a day in their own life in the future once they have achieved their dream.
5. Beyoncé created the charitable foundation BeyGOOD to support initiatives of education, business, housing and more. Have the class split into groups of five and ask each to imagine their own charitable foundation. What 3 or 4 initiatives would they like the foundation to support? Have them create a name, write a mission statement for the organization and present their ideas to the class.

