

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Mindy Kaling

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Mindy Kaling was born in Massachusetts to Indian parents who met while working in Africa. Her home was always filled with laughter, and Mindy dreamt of seeing women who looked like her on television shows and in movies. Mindy was discovered while doing stand-up comedy and became a writer and then an actress on the TV show that made her famous, *The Office*. She has continued writing, directing, and starring in television and films. Mindy is an inspiring role model because she shows everyone that dreaming big and working hard are things that everyone can do to accomplish their goals.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. How did Mindy become interested in comedy?
2. As a child, what did Mindy dream of doing?
3. What were some of the firsts that Mindy did in show business?
4. Who are the important people in Mindy's life?
5. Why is Mindy an inspiring dreamer and role model?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Mindy's family loved to laugh. They watched funny TV shows and movies and liked to do things to make each other laugh. Ask the students to share something that makes them laugh. It can be a TV show or movie or book, but it can also be a person in their life or something that happens. For example, maybe it always makes them laugh when their dog runs around in a circle at top speed in the backyard.
2. Growing up, Mindy felt like she was the only Indian-American girl in the world (p. 5) because she didn't see anyone who looked like her in the television shows or movies that she loved. Ask the students if they have ever felt like Mindy in a situation.
3. On pg. 6, the word 'determined' is used to describe Mindy. Discuss what that word means and share a time when you were determined to do something. Then ask students to share a time when they were determined.

4. Mindy is described as a role model for South Asian women because of how hard she worked to include people like her on TV and film, but she is also a role model for everyone (p. 14). Ask the students to name a role model in their lives. It can be someone they know personally or a famous person whom they don't know. What does that person do that makes them inspirational? What qualities do they possess?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. On page 7, we see Mindy's dream board. Discuss what a dream board is and provide students with materials such as poster board and magazines to create their own. Mindy made hers before she went to college, but students can dream about what they want to happen during this school year, over the summer, or when they grow up.

2. Mindy performed jokes at a comedy club before she became famous (p. 9). Explain what a stand-up comedy club is and ask students to come the following day with at least one joke to share with the class. Depending on the level of your students, you might need to inform the parents so that they can help their child come prepared with a joke. Also ensure you have some jokes available for students who forget their joke or don't come with one. Set up a stage area in the classroom with a fake microphone, just like readers see in the book illustration. Have the students take turns coming up for their "act" and sharing their joke(s).

3. In college, Mindy drew comic strips. Show students a variety of examples of what school-appropriate comic strips look like and lead a discussion about how they are set up, drawn (including speech and/or thought bubbles), and read. Provide them with paper that is set up like a comic strip with boxes already created and allow them to create their own comic strip. You can offer a variety of strips with different numbers of boxes drawn. Students can draw a comic of a story they've made up or they can create one that depicts an event that happened to them.

4. As Mindy became more famous for doing what she loved and making her dreams come true, she was featured on the covers of magazines (p. 12). Provide students with a blank paper and have them design a magazine cover featuring themselves that shows that they have made a dream of theirs come true. For example, if a student wants to be a doctor when they grow up, they would draw themselves in a doctor's coat on the cover of a medical magazine. The dreams don't have to just be lifelong dreams; if a student dreams of being able to ride a bike and has been working really hard at it, they could draw themselves on a bicycle.

5. Whether she is writing jokes, scripts, or books, Mindy loves telling stories. Have the students sit in a circle and explain that they are going to do a storytime circle. Each person will say one line of a story and then the person to their right will say the next line, followed by the person to their right saying another line, and so on as the story builds. Explain that it is really important to listen to what each person is saying so that the story makes sense. Try a few practice rounds and be ready to offer a suggestion to keep the story moving if someone gets stuck when it is their turn. You could also try this in smaller circles of students.

