Slumdog Group Work Critical thinking/viewing:

We will watch the first ten minutes of the film in two segments of about five minutes each.

[The first segment ends when the tortured Jamal says “I knew the answers” and the second segment then begins with young boys (one of them the young Jamal) playing cricket on an airfield and ends when the policeman starts to play the video of the television show.]

After watching these two segments, sit in groups of four and discuss the following points. One of you writes down your conclusions, and then the whole class discusses the same points.

Segment 1 – Comprehension

1) The film opens with Jamal in an interrogation room. How does the policeman try to irritate him? How does Jamal react? Does this scene remind you of anything we have recently studied?

2) What familiar sound do we hear right after the policeman strikes Jamal? What effect does this create?

3) What text then appears on the screen?

Segment 1 – Interpretation

1) What might “It is written” suggest?

2) When Jamal tells Prem (the host of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?) what he does for a living, Prem encourages a reaction from the audience by laughingly calling Jamal a chai-wallah (tea-maker; a wallah is one who performs a specific task). Would you expect a host to encourage such a reaction from the audience in a Western culture’s version of the show? What might this suggest about Indian culture?

3) What effect is created by the tight editing of the contrasts between Jamal’s face on the show and in the police interrogation?

Segment 2 – Comprehension

1) How are we shown the title of the film?

2) What are the boys (Salim and Jamal) doing at the start of this segment?

3) Why are they being chased?

4) Where do they end up?

5) What is the policeman’s reaction when he has to let the mother take hold of the boys?

6) Where do the boys end up at the end of this segment?

7) What two character names from a book does the teacher call Salim and Jamal?

Segment 2 – Interpretation

1) What does the high-five shared by the two brothers as they run away suggest?

2) What is the effect of all the quick shots of the setting as the boys run away?

3) What is the effect of showing the lazy dog while the boys are running?

4) What effect does the music add to this segment?