Bend It Like Beckham
Bend It Like Beckham - Synopsis:

Jess Bahmra idolizes professional British football player David Beckham. But Jess is different from most fans; she's a talented player in her own right.

Unfortunately, her traditional Indian Sikh parents have other plans for their youngest daughter. They expect Jess to go to university and follow in the footsteps of her sister, Pinky, who is preparing to marry in a traditional Indian Sikh wedding.

When Jess meets Jules, who plays for a local female football team, she pursues her own dream and begins to play, keeping her participation a secret from her parents and often leading to disastrous results.

Ultimately, Jess has to decide whether to live life on her terms or act in accordance with her parents' wishes.
Bend It Like Beckham

The film addresses a range of issues on culture, religion, tradition, stereotyping, and prejudice & discrimination.

You will also be writing a film review at the end which requires you to discuss these issues.
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Chapter Synopsis
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**Chapter 1** (00) – Introduction to characters, setting of scene including preparations for Pinky’s wedding

**Chapter 2** (6 min) – Jess and Jules first meet, Pinky & finance’s Sikh engagement party.

**Chapter 3** (11 min) – Jess goes to see Jules’ team train and gets accepted, Jules’ mum expresses her dislike for Jules’ interest in sport.

**Chapter 4** (15 min) – Jess goes to her first training session

**Chapter 5** (20 min) – Jess is told by her parents that she must stop playing football now that she is a young woman, but Jess secretly goes to the next training session nonetheless.

**Chapter 6** (26 min) – Jess keeps training under the pretence of having a job at HMV, Pinky finds out.

**Chapter 7** (30 min) – Jules & Jess go shopping for football boots, Jules shows Jess how women’s football had a much higher status in the USA.
Chapter 8 (36 min) – Jess meets Jules’ mum, due to a misunderstanding Pinky’s engagement is broken off, Pinky tells her parents that Jess has still been playing for the football team.

Chapter 9 (40 min) – Jess doesn’t go to training, Joe goes round to speak to Mr & Mrs Bhamra but is told Jess cannot play for the team.

Chapter 10 (43 min) – Jess & Pinky pretend to their parents to be visiting a cousin so that Jess can go to Hamburg with the football team but get caught, Jules catches Jess trying to kiss Joe and they fall out.

Chapter 11 (50 min) – Jess discusses issues with Pinky, then with Joe.

Chapter 12 (55 min) – Jess visits Jules to make amends but they end up arguing, Jules’ mum overhears and thinks they have been girlfriends that have just split up, Tony tells Jess he’s gay.

Chapter 13 (1:00) – Jess gets sent off when losing her temper when an opponent calls her a Paki, Pinky’s marriage is back on but the date is the same as the football team’s game at the finals.

Chapter 14 (1:08) – Jules goes round to tell Jess that an American scout will be at the final, Jules’ mum realises she needs to be supportive of Jules’ ambitions.
Chapter 15 (1:11) – Jess gets her A-Level results, celebrations for Pinky’s wedding begin and Joe goes round to tell Mr Bhamra about the talent scout.

Chapter 16 (1:19) – During Pinky’s wedding Jess makes the 2nd half of the match with Mr Bhamra’s approval and scores a penalty goal to win the match.

Chapter 17 (1:26) – Back at the wedding Jess is accused by Jules’ mum of being a lesbian.

Chapter 18 (1:32) – Jess explains to her family that she had played at the final and been accepted for a scholarship, Mr Bhamra realises that whilst he had allowed his experiences of racism put an end to his ambition to play sport he should support Jess in her decisions, Mrs Bhamra also gives consent.

Chapter 19 (1:36) – Jess and Jules leave for the USA and say their farewells at the airport when they spot David Beckham.

Chapter 20 (1:42) – credits
Solve the anagrams below related to some of the issues raised in the film *Bend It Like Beckham*:

- miracs
- lecturu
- reedcupij
- boomhohapi
- yensettorpig
- minidrascitino
- nortitadi
- nidyetti
- quitealy
Solve the anagrams below related to some of the issues raised in the film *Bend It Like Beckham*:

- racism
- culture
- prejudice
- homophobia
- stereotyping
- discrimination
- tradition
- identity
- equality
What examples are there of how the issues opposite affect these characters in the film?
DISCUSSION POINTS

• The Sikh religion has taught since its beginnings that men and women are equal. Why do think Mr and Mrs Bhamra don't like Jess playing football?

• How much do the characters of Jess and Pinky follow or respect their traditional Indian Sikh heritage?

• How important is it to preserve traditions and cultural identity?

• What points are raised by the film on the theme of growing up in a traditional ethnic minority family in modern Britain?

• Is there either sexual inequality or sexism in sport?

• Is the racism Joe experiences the same as the racism Jess experiences?

• Why can't Tony be open about being gay? How might he feel about this?

• How do you think some characters have changed by the end of the film?
Write a review for a film magazine. You will need to write a short introduction explaining to readers what the film is about, and can give a very brief summary of the plot and who the significant characters are.

You could then give answers to the interviewer's questions on the next slide. Aim to give extended answers, meaning that you should try to explain your answers in detail. For example you could use quotes or events from the film to support your answer or give arguments that fit with Jess' character and the type of person she is portrayed as in the film.
INTERVIEWER'S QUESTIONS:

1) Why does Jess come into conflict with her parents about playing football?

2) Does her playing against her parents’ wishes mean that she either doesn’t respect them or their culture, traditions and beliefs?

3) Do you agree with Jess deceiving her parents in order to continue playing football?

4) What do you think the film is saying about the issue of growing up in a traditional family but faced with a very different world outside?

5) How far do you think Jess believes that British Asians like herself should question, challenge or change the traditions they have inherited?

6) What are some of the other issues raised by the film?
Issues of Equality in Sikhism: Sikhism is a religion which emphasises equality between people. This is shown in a number of ways, including:

• From the religion's beginnings 500 years ago, both men and women have been seen as eligible (able and allowed) to act as a religious leader for their community.

• When Guru Nanak started the religion he said that there was no difference between Muslims and Hindus (these two main religious groups in India were often in violent conflict at the time; he was trying to show that they had no need to fight over religious differences) and Sikhs strongly believe that all religions are equally valid - they are different ways of worshipping / following the same God.

• During the meal served after the Sikh religious service at the Gurdwara, only vegetarian food is served (the Langar is the name of this communal kitchen & dining area), so even though some Sikh’s eat meat (the religion teaches it is a personal choice) regardless of your religious or personal beliefs you can share in this meal.

• Both during the service and afterwards during the meal, everybody sits on the floor to show that no one person is above another.
Therefore, the following question raises:

If Sikhism is a religion based on equality, why is it that in the film *Bend It Like Beckham* Jess' (Sikh) parents do not want or allow her to play football - often referring to reasons (amongst others) that because she is a girl / young woman it is not appropriate for her to play? To what extent do you think the culture (as opposed to religion) of Jess’ parents is a contributing factor to the way they think and feel about Jess playing football?
Some other questions to consider that you could discuss in your film review to develop your work (you do not have to answer all of them: one well-explored idea can be as good a piece of work as one that covers many):

- What is it / might it be like to belong to a traditional culture yet living in modern Britain?
- Where might there be a conflict of attitudes, beliefs, values etc.?
- What traditional values in Britain have changed or disappeared in modern society?
- Why might parents of ethnic or religious minoritites living in modern Britain want to bring their children up in a [cultural/religious] traditional way (i.e. speaking the traditional language at home, following the beliefs, customs, traditions, dress code etc. of their country of their [ancestral] origin)?
- Are there benefits or advantages of having a traditional [cultural/religious] upbringing?
In what ways might a traditional [cultural/religious] upbringing be confusing or a conflict for a young person who lives 'two different lives' (the traditional one at home and a modern one when at school or out with friends)? Do you think (from people you know) that it is conflicting or confusing?

Are there any other disadvantages or problems with having a traditional [cultural/religious] upbringing?

In the film, Jess’ parents appear to be concerned about what the rest of the Indian / Sikh community will think (both about Pinky’s sexual behaviour and Jess’ footballing)? Why do you think this is? Do you think it influences (or puts pressure on) either they way they think or the decisions they make? To what degree (is it the main influence or are there other more significant reasons)? Are they right to take the rest of their community’s opinion about them into consideration?
A lot of the events, or things we find out, in the film raise various issues about tradition, culture, identity, respect, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, racism, homophobia, obedience to your parents (or traditional culture/religion) vs. living ‘your own life’, and marriage. Where or how are these issues raised in the film? Do you think they are dealt with realistically? Do any of them result in a moral or message? Are they ones that you agree with?