



## Afghan Star

(UK 2009)

87 minutes

Grade 10-12

### Summary:

In Afghanistan you literally risk your life to sing. However, that risk has not stopped some 2,000 people since 2005 from auditioning for cash prizes and a record deal on Tolo TV's wildly popular America Idol-style series, Afghan Star. Each week, millions of Afghans tune in to watch the competitors, voting for their favourites via cell phone, a process that is, for many, their first encounter with the democratic process.

### Discussions to complete *before* viewing the film:

1. How much do you know about Afghan culture?
2. Separate into 2 groups – boys/girls. Make a list in each group of what you think you would do as a typical Afghan youth?
3. As a Canadian, are you 'allowed' to sing in public? In all parts of Canada? Are you 'allowed' to dance in all parts of Canada? Discuss what it would like if you were 'forbidden' to do so and could be killed for disobeying.

### Discussions to complete *after* viewing the film:

1. What did the film teach you about the divisiveness of Afghanistan?
2. How's your life different that the life of an Afghan youth?
3. Do you think it's right to have politics/religion interfere with your 'right' to express yourself?
4. Has your opinion changed about how isolated Afghanistan is? If so why? If not – why not?
5. Do you believe that Afghanistan has been 'Westernized'. What evidence of Westernization supports that theory from the movie?
6. What were the risks that each contender faced by competing in 'Afghan Star'? And if you were one of those contenders would you have entered into the competition- discuss.
7. What Afghan ethnic groups were represented by the contestants in "Afghan Star"? If you would like, divide into the represented ethnic groups and present the class with the the main cultural beliefs of each of the groups?
8. Do you think that Afghan society has benefited from the changes that have come since the Taliban when you look at society today versus the 1980's?
9. Should a competition like this be allowed in Afghanistan given how high the stakes are?
10. What did you like/dislike about the documentary and what important information/facts did you come away with (or learn) after watching it?