

***Entre les murs*: Questions for discussion**

Introduction

- Have you ever been inside a French school?
- If classroom walls could talk, what stories would they tell?

Inside a Real French School

- What does the school look like?
- What happens in class: how do pupils interact with their teachers and each other, and what kind of things do they do/learn?
- How are pupils disciplined if they do something wrong?
- What do we find out about school life outside the classroom?
- How does this compare to what you have seen on French exchanges?

Generational Conflict: Pupils vs. Parents

We don't see many parents in the film, but we do hear the students talking about them.

- What effect does this have on the story and the way we react to the characters?
- Is the parents' presence less powerful just because we don't see as much of them?

All French schools have termly meetings called *conseils de classe*, attended by teachers, parent representatives and student representatives.

- What do you think about this process?
- How would you feel if you, or your parents, were asked to get involved?

Cultural Conflict

- The students cannot always relate to M. Marin's language and cultural references. Can you think of some examples?
- In one lesson, the class discusses shame – *la honte*. Why do you think students like Wei and Boubacar have formed strong opinions about shame, and why might M. Marin not be able to understand them?
- Some of the students do not define themselves as French. Why do you think this is? Think first about the specific characters, then more generally.
- How do you describe your nationality, and how does this compare with the way your classmates describe theirs?

Realism vs. Reality

- Just because we see the characters in a realistic situation on screen, does this mean that we are also seeing what they are really like as people off the screen?
- What might influence the way the cast members present themselves in the film?

Conclusion

- What do you think about the ending of the film?
- Is it optimistic or pessimistic?
- Who do you sympathise with most by the end of the film, and why?
- What do you think the director wants to say in these final scenes?