



A Curriculum Guide to:

## *Muslim Girls Rise: Inspirational Champions of Our Time*

By Saira Mir, illustrated by Aaliya Jaleel

### **About the Book**

*Little Leaders* meets *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* in this nonfiction picture book that introduces readers to nineteen powerhouse Muslim women who rose up and made their voices heard. Learn about their childhoods and how their interests or experiences led them to impact the world around them through food, online platforms, fashion, research, space travel, and so much more. Empowering, moving, and inspiring, these women's stories welcome readers to begin a journey that celebrates remarkable achievements and shows that anything is possible if you believe in yourself.

### **Prereading activities**

The activities below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4-7.2,9)

1. Look at the title of the book and the definitions of *rise* given in the early pages. Which definition most resonates with you? How do you think it feels to rise up? How might you apply this sentiment to your own life? Explain your answers. Keep a list of your favorite examples of rising as you are reading.

2. The text begins with a paragraph that says, “People may tell you that you can’t do something because of the way you look, dress, or pray. Your name may sound different. Never forget that you are extraordinary. You are powerful, brave, and clever. Great things come from people like you.” What does this introduction tell us about the book’s content and messages? Why might the author want to remind us of our value and potential?

3. Find a map of the world to display in your classroom. As you read, place a pin where each story takes place, and mark the map with each woman’s name. Can you explain how ideas moved from one part of the world to another?

4. Flip through the book and look at each woman’s section. How is it organized? Think about what information the images provide, and what they add to the experience. Why do you think the author chose to include a quote from each woman?

### Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4-7.1,2,3,7,9) (W.4-7.6,8,9) (RL.4-7.6) (W.4-7.6,7,8,9)

1. Of the women featured in these pages, whom do you most identify with? What qualities do you admire, and how do you see these qualities reflected in your everyday life? Provide examples from your life that illustrate this.

2. Where do you see influences of these women’s lasting legacies today? How do you think their stories have impacted others beginning their careers? For example, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy makes films exposing injustices and demanding change. Make a chart of these legacies.

3. Had you heard of any of these women before reading this book? If not, why do you think that is? Which woman do you think should be widely known or respected for their contributions? Write a persuasive essay introducing her, and make your argument as to why she should be more well known. Be sure to include at least three reasons and specific details to support your choice. Explain your point of view using convincing language to deliver a strong message.

4. Name some of the women whom you are most excited to learn more about. What did they do? Why do you think they are considered to be “inspirational champions of our time”?

5. What is a Nobel Peace Prize? Explore the Nobel Peace Prize website (<https://www.nobelpeaceprize.org>) to understand the categories and criteria for the award. Then read about the two women included in this book who have won the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as the two Muslim women, Ilwad Elman and Hajer Sharief, who are not included in this book but were nominated for the 2019 prize. What characteristics do they have in common? Is there someone else in the book who you think should have won? Explain your answer by citing evidence from the book. Use a graphic organizer like the ones found on this website (<https://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>) that features the Nobel Peace Prize in the center and the women, their characteristics, and their winning areas out to the sides.

6. Throughout the book, the author uses quoted statements for each of the women to help us understand and define them. Find a quote that is interesting and inspirational to you. Write a personal essay on why the quote is important, what it means to you, and what it means to the book's themes. Be sure to include an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.
7. Many of the women in *Muslim Girls Rise* are activists campaigning for human rights. Do you think they've made progress? How do they try to get people to listen? Which of their actions could you emulate in your community?
8. What does advocacy mean? What does it take to become an advocate? Make a word cloud (<http://www.wordle.net/>) using words that show personal characteristics that made these women strong advocates for what they believed in.
9. In small groups, make a chart of five different kinds of obstacles these women had to face. Include the name of the woman, who encouraged her, why they were encouraged, obstacles they had to overcome, and the results of that encouragement. How many of these obstacles were related specifically to being a Muslim woman in their field? Hang charts on the wall, and with your classmates, look for common elements across themes. Discuss the different approaches these women took, and how they accomplished their goals.
10. If you were going to write a sequel to *Muslim Girls Rise*, what criteria would you use for including other women? Consider areas of study, goals, accomplishments. Compile a list of women that fit your rationale and decide what quote(s) you'd include in their sections. Be sure to give reasons and examples from your current reading and research.
11. Choose a career or experience featured in the book and think about someone your age who has similar dreams; it could be someone who you've heard about, or a classmate or friend. Once you've selected them, think about how you might support their efforts or interests, and any challenges they might face. Share your findings with your class.
12. The last pages of the book ask you to "Find your passion, and like these women, you will RISE," before listing each woman and how they've found their place. Choose a verb for yourself, and add your name to the bottom of the list. Why did you choose to describe yourself in this way? How might this list help when thinking about your future goals?

### Extension Activities

The activities below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (SL.4-7.1,2,3,4,5,6) (RL.4-7.5) (W.4-7.6,8,9) (RI.4-7.3) (RST.6-7.7)

1. Through their advocacy work or careers, many of these women seek out or share others' stories. Pretend you are Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and are interviewing one of these women for a documentary about her life. What questions would you ask? What would be the topics or messages of the film? With a partner, plan an interview exchange between Sharmeen and one of these women. Use your school library or the Internet to research the interviewee you've chosen

that would help you to answer the questions accurately. Then perform the interview for your class, with one of you as Sharmeen and the other playing the role of the interviewee.

2. Many of the women find strength in educating others. What would Muzoon Almellehan, Maryam Mirzakhani, Malala Yousafzai, Linda Sarsour, or Ilyasah Shabazz say about the importance of education? With your classmates, divide into five groups, each studying one of these five women and their efforts to educate others, or the role education has played in their lives. Stage a five-person panel about education with your teacher as the moderator, switching roles for each question posed; each group member will have a chance to participate to represent their chosen woman's view. Discuss the struggles to connect communities with the education they need, and how education can raise awareness. Talk about how having an education can both impact an individual and incite global change, and the tools and efforts needed to accomplish this.

3. With your classmates, create a time line of the women featured in *Muslim Girls Rise* to post in your classroom; use the Internet or library resources to locate these dates. The time line can be constructed using lengths of butcher paper on the walls or floor. Decide with your classmates whether to use birthdates or dates of major accomplishments to mark the time line, and add pictures of the women or objects related to their work.

4. What would it be like to spend a day with one of these women? Choose one woman and write a letter to her explaining what you would like to do or discuss if you could spend the day with her. Be sure to include where you would go, what you would do, and the kinds of questions you would like to ask her.

5. Create a "Choose your own adventure" book using Google Forms or Google Slides for one of the women from *Muslim Girls Rise* (<https://www.google.com/slides/about>). Consider the different consequences if she had not been encouraged, had chosen a different path, or had lived during a different time period.

\*For teachers: use examples and suggestions from <http://blog.justinbirckbichler.com/2017/06/creating-their-own-adventures.html> to help set up a "Choose your own adventure" template for students to use.

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