



# UNHEARD VOICES

## Stories of LGBT History



**An oral history and curriculum project that seeks to integrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) history, people and events into middle and high school curricula**





# UNHEARD VOICES

## Stories of LGBT History



### Table of Contents

#### Introductory Materials

- Unit Background and Overview ..... Page 3
- A Note About the Lessons in this Unit..... Page 4
- A Note About Language ..... Page 4

#### Lesson 1 – “A Peculiar Disposition of the Eyes”: The Invisibility of LGBT People in History ..... Page 5

- Excerpts from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison ..... Page 10
- Examples of Marginalized Groups in Society ..... Page 11
- History Match-Up (Biographies) ..... Page 12
- History Match-Up (Historical Figures) ..... Page 13
- History Match-Up Answer Key ..... Page 14

#### Lesson 2 – The History and Impact of Anti-LGBT Slurs ..... Page 16

- Dictionary Print Ad: “Gay” ..... Page 20
- Dictionary Print Ad: “Faggot” ..... Page 21
- Dictionary Print Ad: “Dyke” ..... Page 22
- The History of the Word “Gay” ..... Page 23

- The History of the Word “Faggot” ..... Page 24
- The History of the Word “Dyke” ..... Page 25
- Youth Voices on “That’s So Gay” ..... Page 26

**Lesson 3 – In-Group, Out-Group: The Exclusion of LGBT People from Societal Institutions ..... Page 27**

- Inclusive and Exclusive LGBT Policies..... Page 31

**Lesson 4 – Winning the Right to Marry: Historic Parallels ... Page 32**

- To Be Equal: The Journey of David Wilson ..... Page 36
- Winning the Freedom to Marry: Progress in the States ..... Page 38
- The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) ..... Page 39

**Lesson 5 – Understanding Gender Identity ..... Page 41**

- Hir by Alysia Harris and Aysha El Shamayleh ..... Page 45
- Scenarios: Gender Identity and Expression ..... Page 47
- How to be an Ally to Transgender People ..... Page 49

**Additional Resources**

- Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity ..... Page 51
- Resources on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History ..... Page 54

## UNIT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In response to the lack of representation of LGBT people in school curricula and disproportionate incidents of bullying and violence against LGBT youth, ADL, GLSEN and StoryCorps have collaborated to create *Unheard Voices*, an oral history and curriculum project that will help educators to integrate LGBT history, people and issues into their instructional programs.

At the core of the program are brief audio interviews with individuals who bore witness to or helped to shape LGBT history in some way. Each interview is accompanied by a backgrounder with discussion questions and activities for educators, and a student reading with biographical information about the interview subject and historical background on the era. (The interviews and backgrounders are available at [www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices).)

In addition, several lesson plans are included for middle and high school students that explore broad themes – such as silence and invisibility, inclusion and exclusion, and name-calling – as well as specific topics related to the interviews, such as marriage equality and gender identity. One or more oral histories are integrated into each lesson plan.

According to GLSEN's 2009 National School Climate Survey, less than a fifth of the seven thousand students surveyed (17.9%) reported that LGBT-related topics were included in their textbooks or other assigned readings. When asked whether they had been taught about LGBT people, history or events in school, a vast majority (86.6%) of students reported that these topics were not taught in any of their classes, and only about a tenth (11.7%) of all students were exposed to positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events.

The consequences of this invisibility can be devastating for young people. The survey cited above indicates that 84.6% of LGBT students were verbally harassed and 40.1% were physically harassed at school in the past year, three-fifths (61.1%) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and about a third (30%) skipped a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe. In such environments, *all* students are restricted by rigid sexual and gender norms and narrow conceptions of humanity.

Conversely, the GLSEN study indicates that in schools with positive representations of LGBT topics in the curriculum, LGBT students were less likely to report hearing homophobic remarks or experiencing victimization at school, and more likely to report that school personnel and their peers intervened when homophobic remarks occurred. Less than half (42.1%) of LGBT students in schools with inclusive curricula felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation, compared to almost two-thirds (63.6%) of students in schools without this resource. Consequently, less than a fifth (17.1%) of LGBT students with inclusive curricula reported missing school in the past month compared to almost a third (31.6%) of other students.

Understood within this context, the resources in *Unheard Voices* can serve as a lifeline for LGBT youth and a potent bullying prevention tool. More generally, LGBT inclusive curricula can help educators to create more honest and accurate instructional programs, as well as safer and more affirming environments for all youth.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE LESSONS IN THIS UNIT

The lessons in this unit explore lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues in an open and direct way. Given the absence of this topic in the curriculum and the disproportionate rates of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment, it is important to educate students about these issues. When discussing any new or sensitive topic, however, there is the potential for some students to react in stereotypical or disrespectful ways. It is therefore imperative that educators carefully review each lesson, assess students' maturity and readiness to engage in the lesson prior to implementation, and establish clear parameters with students that will ensure safe and constructive dialogue. See *Establishing a Safe Learning Environment* ([http://www.adl.org/education/brown\\_2004/safe\\_environment.asp](http://www.adl.org/education/brown_2004/safe_environment.asp)) and *Talking About Diversity with Students* ([http://www.adl.org/education/brown\\_2004/brown\\_911.asp](http://www.adl.org/education/brown_2004/brown_911.asp)) for guidelines on building safe forums for discussing sensitive issues.

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

There are many terms that are used to describe what is commonly known as the “gay community.” Since the word “gay” most often refers to homosexual men, we have chosen to use the more inclusive “LGBT,” which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Though this term may sound unfamiliar at first, we encourage you to use it consistently with your students and to avoid reflexively using “gay” to describe the broad spectrum of sexual and gender identities.

There are many people within the LGBT communities who use a variety of other terms to describe themselves, including queer, questioning, and same-gender loving. Though we have chosen to use LGBT consistently here, we encourage you to respect the terms that individuals in your community have chosen to describe themselves.

While it is important to increase young people's awareness about the damaging effects of anti-LGBT language and to discourage the negative use of words like “gay” and “queer,” it is also important to reinforce that these are not “bad” words in and of themselves and are perfectly acceptable when used in appropriate contexts.

When discussing history, it is also important to note that words like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are modern terms that we use to describe people today, and that many historical figures would not have used these labels to describe themselves. For the sake of expediency, the labels “gay,” “lesbian,” “transgender” and “LGBT” are often used to describe people who – according to the historical record – had same-sex romantic or emotional attractions or relationships, or transgressed societal expectations with regard to gender. If you choose to use modern labels to describe historical figures, it may be useful to preface the discussion with the above explanation.

# Lesson 1 – “A Peculiar Disposition of the Eyes”: The Invisibility of LGBT People in History

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

### Time

2 hours; if time is limited, complete Parts III and IV only (50 mins.)

### Grade Level

Grades 8 & up

### Strategies and Skills

analyzing primary documents, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, listening skills, reading skills, research skills, writing skills

### Key Words and Phrases

civil rights, discrimination, disposition, invisibility, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), marginalized, oral history, resentment, stereotype, suffrage

## OVERVIEW

This lesson explores the ways in which LGBT people, events and issues have been made invisible in mainstream accounts of history. In the first half of the lesson, students reflect on excerpts from Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* to explore the impact of invisibility on people and as a jumping off point for researching how different groups have been historically marginalized in society. In the second part of the lesson, students participate in a history matching game and listen to LGBT oral histories that increase their awareness of significant LGBT people and events, and the ways in which these topics have been erased from the historical record.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze literary excerpts and make “text to self” connections.
- Students will research historically marginalized groups in society.
- Students will increase their awareness of the ways in which LGBT people have been made invisible in history.
- Students will learn about historically significant LGBT people, topics and events.

## LESSON PREPARATION

### Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- (Optional) *Excerpts from Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison* (one per student)
- *Examples of Marginalized Groups in Society* (one copy)
- *History Match-Up (Biographies)* (one per small group)
- *History Match-Up (Historical Figures)* (one per small group)
- *History Match-Up (Answer Key)* (one copy)

Other Materials: Unheard Voices interviews and background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)), chart paper, markers, scissors, computer, speakers

### Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare quotes (see steps # 1 and 4).
- Create a set of *History Match-Up* cards for each small group (see step # 10).
- Prepare to play audio interviews (see step # 15).

## PROCEDURES

### Part I: Exploring the Impact of Invisibility (30 minutes)

1. Post the following quote from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (but do not identify the source). Ask for a volunteer to read it aloud.

"I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids...I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me."

2. Direct students to reflect on the quote and to write a paragraph in response using the following prompts:
  - Describe a time when you felt "invisible" – either unseen or unheard by others.
  - What caused you to feel invisible?
  - Were you able to eventually overcome that feeling? If so, how? If not, why?
  - How did the experience affect or change you?

---

**Optional:** If time is limited in class, have students complete this writing assignment for homework prior to conducting the lesson.

---

3. Have students share their experiences in pairs or ask for a few volunteers to read their paragraph aloud to the class. As a whole group, discuss the emotional impact of being unnoticed, disregarded or silenced by others.

### Part II: Researching Historically Marginalized Groups (30 minutes + time for research)

4. Post the following and explain that it is a continuation of the quote discussed earlier. Have a volunteer read it aloud.

"That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality...you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision...you often doubt if you really exist...It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back...You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world..."

---

**Optional:** Distribute the handout, *Excerpts from Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison*, so that students can read the broader passage from which the above quotes are taken.

---

5. Discuss some of the following questions in response to the quote:
  - What do you think the narrator means by a "disposition of the eyes"? (If students need help, define *disposition* as a habit, tendency or attitude of mind.)
  - What is the narrator's purpose in setting apart the idea of "inner eyes" from "physical eyes"? What factors shape what our "inner eyes" see?
  - What causes "poor vision" – as the narrator sees it – in some people?
  - What is the impact when others don't see you or recognize that you "exist in the world"?

6. Ask students if they have any ideas about why the narrator in this story might have felt unseen. Explain that the quote comes from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, which explores many of the social issues facing African Americans in the early 20th century. Briefly discuss the reasons why some African-American people might have felt invisible during this era.
7. Ask students if they are aware of other groups that may have felt "bumped against by those of poor vision" at different times in our country's history (or that may feel that way now). List their responses on a sheet of chart paper. Some examples are included as a reference in *Examples of Marginalized Groups in Society*.
8. In class or for homework, have students select one group that has been marginalized or made invisible in some way for further study. Assign them to consult at least two sources to learn more about the selected group, and to write a poem or create a piece of artwork that addresses the following questions:
  - How has the group been "bumped against by those of poor vision"?
  - How has the group been made to "doubt if they really exist"?
  - How has the group "bumped people back" and "convinced themselves that they exist in the real world"?Make time in class for students to share and discuss their poems and artwork.

### **Part III: History Match-Up (30 minutes)**

9. Tell students that you will continue to discuss the theme of invisibility through a matching game that explores how much they know about certain historical figures. Explain that, in small groups, students will try to match cards with the names of people to a master list of corresponding biographies.

---

**Optional:** To add an element of fun, make the matching exercise a contest in which small groups compete to see who can complete the game the fastest and/or make the most matches.

---

10. Divide the class into small groups of four to six students. Provide each group with a copy of the handout, *History Match-Up (Biographies)*, and a set of cards created from *History Match-Up (Historical Figures)*. Provide a signal for groups to begin and allow about 10 minutes for students to complete the exercise.
11. When all groups have completed the exercise, review the correct answers using *History Match-Up (Answer key)*.
12. Ask students if they were aware as they were working that all of the figures in the exercise have something in common. Challenge students to identify that commonality. If they cannot, reveal that all of the figures were/are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people.

---

**NOTE:** Make sure to explain that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are modern terms that we use to describe people today and that many of the historical figures included in the exercise would not have used these labels to describe themselves. However, the historical



record demonstrates that all of the people in the exercise had same-sex romantic or emotional attractions or relationships, or transgressed societal expectations with regard to gender.

---

13. Conduct a brief discussion using some of the following questions:

- Were you surprised to find that all the figures were/are LGBT? Which ones surprised you the most? Why?
- Which figures had you never heard of? Why do you think you never learned about them before?
- Which figures were you aware of, but never knew they were LGBT? Why do you think you never knew about this aspect of their identity?
- Is it important to know that these figures were/are LGBT? Why or why not? How does this information influence your understanding of history/art/politics or your worldview?
- Why do you think the identities of LGBT people have been erased from history so frequently? What do you think is the impact of this invisibility on society?

#### **Part IV: LGBT Oral Histories (20 minutes minimum; time will vary)**

14. Tell students that three organizations – Anti-Defamation League, GLSEN and StoryCorps – have teamed up to counter the invisibility of LGBT people in history by recording the oral histories of people who have made or witnessed LGBT history in the recent past. Explain that by bringing these oral histories to students in schools across the country, these organizations hope to reduce anti-LGBT stereotypes, prejudice and harassment; increase awareness and appreciation of the contributions of LGBT people; and fill in some of the gaps in the history that is presented in most school books and curricula.
15. Choose one of the interviews to play for students. After students have listened, debrief using some of the discussion questions from the accompanying background materials. (Interviews and backgrounders are available at [www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices).)
16. Either in school or for homework, assign the student reading (found in the background materials) that accompanies the selected interview and have students complete one or more of the suggested activities.
17. Optionally, assign students to select one or two additional interviews that are of interest to them. Have them do a written reflection comparing and contrasting the various stories, and exploring some of the common threads that run through them all.

## EXCERPTS FROM INVISIBLE MAN BY RALPH ELLISON

“I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids – and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination – indeed, everything and anything except me.”

“Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you’re constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren’t simply a phantom in other people’s minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It’s when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you’re a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it’s seldom successful.”

## EXAMPLES OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN SOCIETY

Below are examples of groups that have been unseen and unheard in different ways throughout history or, in the words of Ralph Ellison, “constantly bumped against by those of poor vision.”

1. **Women** (at one time could not own property, vote, hold elective office, attend college, make decisions about divorce or custody, enter into legal contracts)
2. **Native Americans** (experienced forced conversions and education at boarding schools, relocation from ancestral lands, denial of citizenship rights)
3. **People with Disabilities** (once considered unfit to contribute to society, forced to undergo sterilization and enter asylums, denied access to employment and educational opportunities and to public accommodations and services, such as transportation, housing, bathrooms and stores)
4. **Workers/Laborers** (once unable to organize/form unions, denied minimum wages or maximum hours of work per day/week, deprived of safe working conditions and protections for child workers)
5. **Immigrants** (have been denied job opportunities or relegated to unjust guest worker programs, kept apart from family members, denied housing or relegated to specific neighborhoods, assumed to be unpatriotic/disloyal, subject to unfair quotas and literacy tests, unjustly detained)
6. **Religious Minorities** (have been excluded from school and community celebrations, denied job opportunities and workplace accommodation, denied housing in certain neighborhoods, assumed to be unpatriotic/disloyal)

## HISTORY MATCH-UP (BIOGRAPHIES)

<p>The King of Macedonia and conqueror of the Persian Empire. Considered one of the greatest military geniuses of all times and an inspiration for later conquerors such as Hannibal, Caesar and Napoleon.</p>	<p>A prominent American civil rights activist who played a pivotal role in the 19th century women’s suffrage movement. This leader traveled across the nation fighting for a woman’s right to vote and to her own property and earnings, and also for an end to slavery.</p>	<p>American writer and activist, noted for novels on personal identity and sharp essays on civil rights struggle in the United States. This author’s most famous novels include <i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> and <i>Giovanni’s Room</i>.</p>
<p>U.S. naturalist and writer, who studied zoology, worked as a marine biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C. and wrote four best-sellers, including <i>The Sea Around Us</i> and <i>Silent Spring</i>.</p>	<p>An American botanist, educator, and inventor, who is famous for research on peanuts and other alternative crops. Through achievements in poetry, painting and religion, this scientist also helped to dispel the widespread stereotype of the time that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.</p>	<p>U.S. writer who published a total of 19 books, including <i>O Pioneers!</i> and <i>My Antonia</i>. This writer’s novels are frequently set in Nebraska and western pioneer farm settings, and explore the power of the land and the complex relationships of those who dwell on it.</p>
<p>U.S. Democratic politician who has represented Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1980. Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, which oversees the entire financial services industry, this leader is considered to be one of the most powerful members of Congress.</p>	<p>U.S. writer and activist who started out as a journalist for <i>Freedom</i>, Paul Robeson’s newspaper, and went on to write the award winning <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>, the first play by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway.</p>	<p>Italian sculptor, painter, architect and poet who believed that art could capture and preserve the memory of beauty. Masterpieces include <i>David</i>, <i>The Last Judgment</i> and the architectural plans for St. Peter’s Basilica.</p>
<p>A San Francisco City Supervisor who, along with San Francisco mayor George Moscone, was shot and killed by Dan White, a former supervisor who had resigned his seat and who became enraged when the mayor would not reappoint him.</p>	<p>U.S. civil rights activist and writer who organized the New York Congress of Racial Equality and helped to end racial discrimination in the military. A chief political advisor, strategist, and speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr., this activist was the lead organizer of the 1963 March on Washington.</p>	<p>This Russian composer, who struggled with depression, was the creator of symphonies, ballets, and operas including <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, <i>Swan Lake</i>, <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> and <i>The Nutcracker</i>.</p>
<p>English mathematician and scientist most known for breaking the German “Enigma” code during World War II and for pioneering work in the field of technology. Considered by many to be the father of the modern day computer.</p>	<p>An American poet, essayist and journalist, and one of the most influential writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this author’s work presented an equal view of the races and called for an end to slavery. The writer’s poetry collection, <i>Leaves of Grass</i>, and other works were often considered controversial.</p>	<p>A Zuni Native American from New Mexico who was an accomplished weaver, potter and spiritual leader, and also a cultural ambassador who helped bridge the divide between Native and Anglo Americans.</p>

## HISTORY MATCH-UP (HISTORICAL FIGURES)

*Cut apart and mix up a set of cards for each small group before distributing.*

<p><b>Alexander the Great</b> (356-323 BC)</p>	<p><b>Susan B. Anthony</b> (1820-1906)</p>	<p><b>James Baldwin</b> (1924-1987)</p>
<p><b>Rachel Carson</b> (1907-1964)</p>	<p><b>George Washington Carver</b> (1864-1943)</p>	<p><b>Willa Cather</b> (1873-1947)</p>
<p><b>Barney Frank</b> (1940- )</p>	<p><b>Lorraine Hansberry</b> (1930-1965)</p>	<p><b>Michelangelo</b> (1475-1564)</p>
<p><b>Harvey Milk</b> (1930-1978)</p>	<p><b>Bayard Rustin</b> (1910-1987)</p>	<p><b>Pyotr Tchaikovsky</b> (1840-1893)</p>
<p><b>Alan Turing</b> (1912-1954)</p>	<p><b>Walt Whitman</b> (1819-1892)</p>	<p><b>We'Wha</b> (1849-1896)</p>

## HISTORY MATCH-UP ANSWER KEY

**Alexander the Great (356-323 BC):** The King of Macedonia and conqueror of the Persian Empire. Considered one of the greatest military geniuses of all times and an inspiration for later conquerors such as Hannibal, Caesar and Napoleon.

**Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906):** A prominent American civil rights activist who played a pivotal role in the 19th century women's suffrage movement. This leader traveled across the nation fighting for a woman's right to vote and to her own property and earnings, and also for an end to slavery.

**James Baldwin (1924-1987):** American writer and activist, noted for novels on personal identity and sharp essays on civil rights struggle in the United States. This author's most famous novels include *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room*.

**Rachel Carson (1907-1964):** U.S. naturalist and writer, who studied zoology, worked as a marine biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C. and wrote four best-sellers, including *The Sea Around Us* and *Silent Spring*.

**George Washington Carver (1864-1943):** An American botanist, educator, and inventor, who is famous for research on peanuts and other alternative crops. Through achievements in poetry, painting and religion, this scientist also helped to dispel the widespread stereotype of the time that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.

**Willa Cather (1873-1947):** U.S. writer who published a total of 19 books, including *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia*. This writer's novels are frequently set in Nebraska and western pioneer farm settings, and explore the power of the land and the complex relationships of those who dwell on it.

**Barney Frank (1940- ):** U.S. Democratic politician who has represented Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1980. Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, which oversees the entire financial services industry, this leader is considered to be one of the most powerful members of Congress.

**Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965):** U.S. writer and activist who started out as a journalist for *Freedom*, Paul Robeson's newspaper, and went on to write the award winning *A Raisin in the Sun*, the first play by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway.

**Michelangelo (1475-1564):** Italian sculptor, painter, architect and poet who believed that art could capture and preserve the memory of beauty. Masterpieces include *David*, *The Last Judgment* and the architectural plans for St. Peter's Basilica.

**Harvey Milk (1930-1978):** A San Francisco City Supervisor who, along with San Francisco mayor George Moscone, was shot and killed by Dan White, a former supervisor who had resigned his seat and who became enraged when the mayor would not reappoint him.

**Bayard Rustin (1910-1987):** U.S. civil rights activist and writer who organized the New York Congress of Racial Equality and helped to end racial discrimination in the military. A chief political advisor, strategist, and speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr., this activist was the lead organizer of the 1963 March on Washington.

**Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893):** This Russian composer, who struggled with depression, was the creator of symphonies, ballets, and operas including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

**Alan Turing (1912-1954):** English mathematician and scientist most known for breaking the German “Enigma” code during World War II and for pioneering work in the field of technology. Considered by many to be the father of the modern day computer.

**Walt Whitman (1819-1892):** An American poet, essayist and journalist, and one of the most influential writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this author’s work presented an equal view of the races and called for an end to slavery. The writer’s poetry collection, *Leaves of Grass*, and other works were often considered controversial.

**We’Wha (1849-1896):** A Zuni Native American from New Mexico who was an accomplished weaver, potter and spiritual leader, and also a cultural ambassador who helped bridge the divide between Native and Anglo Americans.

# Lesson 2 – The History and Impact of Anti-LGBT Slurs

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

### Time

55-70 mins. or  
two class periods

### Grade Level

Grades 6 & up

### Strategies and Skills

connecting past to present,  
cooperative group work,  
critical thinking, debate,  
forming opinions,  
historical understanding,  
large and small group  
discussion, media literacy,  
reading skills

### Key Words and Phrases

advocate (n.),  
demoralized, heretic,  
LGBT (lesbian, gay,  
bisexual and transgender),  
offensive, slur

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson students listen to the oral history of an advocate for LGBT family rights, and use her personal story as a vehicle for considering how anti-LGBT attitudes are formed. Students explore the derivation of the words “gay,” “faggot” and “dyke” in order to better understand the long history of judgment and hate behind these words. They also reflect on the testimony of LGBT teens about the impact of terms like “that’s so gay.”

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on the oral history of an individual involved in the LGBT rights movement.
- Students will learn about the history of anti-LGBT slurs.
- Students will analyze media ads about anti-LGBT language.
- Students will identify ways to reduce their use of hurtful language.

## LESSON PREPARATION

### Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- *Dictionary Print Ad: “Gay,” “Faggot” and “Dyke”* (one per small group; middle school option only)
- *The History of the Word “Gay,” “Faggot” and “Dyke”* (one per small group’ high school option only)
- *Student Voices on “That’s So Gay”* (one copy)

Other Materials: Unheard Voices interviews and background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)), computer, speakers, scissors, projector/screen (optional)

### Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare to play interview (see step # 2).
- Chart questions (see step # 5, middle school option).
- (Optional) Prepare projector/screen for viewing ads (see step # 5).
- Cut apart the quotes in *Youth Voices on “That’s So Gay.”*



# PROCEDURES

## Part I: “Two Kinds of Gay” (15 minutes)

1. Tell students that you are going to share a brief excerpt from an interview and provide the following context:

*Terry Boggis is an advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights and helped to found Center Families in 1988, a New York City based program for LGBT parents and their children. In this interview, she talks about being a lesbian parent and the experiences of her son, Ned, at about the time he first started school.*

2. Play the Terry Boggis interview ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)) from :28 to 1:22 and discuss the following questions with students.
  - Regarding Ned’s first experiences with school, Terry observes that “the larger culture starts weighing in”? What does she mean by this? Does this comment relate to any experiences that you have had?
  - What kinds of experiences do you think led Ned to ask if there are “two kinds of gay people,” “good kinds and bad kinds”?
  - Why did Terry assume that wearing the rainbow rings and expressing gay pride might invite a negative response? Would you assume the same thing about the people at your camp or school? Why or why not?
  - In your experience, what language and/or ideas are communicated among your peers that might lead some people to believe gay is “bad”?

---

**Optional:** Play the full Terry Boggis interview (2:20) if students are curious/interested.

---

3. Point out that expressions like “that’s so gay” are used frequently among young people, many of whom excuse this language by saying that “it’s just a joke,” “it just means silly or stupid” and “it has nothing to do with gay people.” Explain that regardless of intentions, terms like these convey damaging messages to others. Emphasize that words, like people, have histories and often carry decades – even centuries – of weight and meaning that can have a greater impact than known.

## Part II: The History of Anti-Gay Epithets (Middle School Option, 30 minutes)

*Use this option for younger students or those with limited experience discussing LGBT issues; otherwise, skip to the high school option for a higher-level investigation.*

4. Tell students that they are going to explore some ads about words that are commonly used to put down LGBT people in order to better appreciate the long history of ignorance, judgment and hate that are behind these words.
5. Divide the class into small groups of three to five students and provide groups with one copy each of *Dictionary Print Ad: “Gay,” “Faggot” and “Dyke.”* Post the questions below and instruct groups to review the ads collaboratively and discuss the questions. Allow about 10 minutes for small group work.

- In your experience, how and where are these words used?
- Though these terms are sometimes intended to just mean “silly” or “stupid,” is that the way they are heard or experienced by everyone? Why?
- How would you say that expressions like “that’s so gay” and “you’re a fag/dyke”—used regularly—impact the atmosphere or climate at school?
- When someone tells you that they are offended by this kind of language, is it okay to just say you “didn’t mean it like that”? How else might you respond?

---

**Optional:** If your students are unable to discuss the ads with respect independently, project the ads on a large screen and conduct this discussion as a large group.

---

6. Reconvene the class. Suggest that the words in the ads are often tossed around without much thought about the hate or hurtfulness behind them. Ask students what they know about the history of these words and how they came to be used as insults. (Use the handouts, *The History of the Word “Gay,” “Faggot”* and *“Dyke,”* as references to help you provide some historical context.)
7. Discuss the following questions:
  - Are you surprised about how these words evolved over time? Can you still use the words today based on their original meaning?
  - Now that you are aware of the history behind these words, will you continue to use them as jokes or insults against others? Why or why not?
  - Do you think people in general would be less likely to use these words as jokes or insults if they knew the history behind them? Why or why not?
  - How do you think words like these affected Terry and Ned (from the interview)? How do you think they affect other LGBT people or families with LGBT people?
  - What can you do to educate your peers about the history and impact of anti-LGBT language?

## **Part II: The History of Anti-Gay Epithets (High School Option, 45 minutes)**

*Use this option for older students or those who are able to discuss LGBT issues with more sophistication; otherwise, go back to the middle school option for younger or more inexperienced students.*

8. Tell students that they are going to read about the history of some words that are commonly used to put down LGBT people in order to better appreciate the long history of ignorance, judgment and hate that are behind these words.
9. Have students count off by three’s. Tell the “ones” that they will read the handout, *The History of the Word “Gay”*; assign the “twos” *The History of the Word “Faggot”*; and assign the “threes” *The History of the Word “Dyke.”* Tell students that, after reading the handouts independently, they will be grouped with classmates who have read a different handout and asked to summarize their reading. Distribute the handouts and give students about 10 minutes to read.

---

**Optional:** Have students summarize their reading by creating a “found poem” – selecting descriptive words, phrases and lines from the passage and arranging/formatting them to create a poem that captures the central ideas of the reading.

---

10. Form new small groups and make sure that all three readings are represented within each group. Instruct students to take turns presenting the main points of each reading to the group (or sharing their “found poems” if this option is used). Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion.
11. Reconvene the whole group and discuss the following questions.
  - What was the most surprising thing you learned from the articles?
  - Why do you think it’s important to know the history of words you may hear and/or use?
  - Now that you are aware of the history behind these words, would you continue to use them? Why or why not?
  - Do you think people in general would be less likely to use these words if they knew the history behind them? Why or why not?
  - How do you think words like these affected Terry and Ned (from the interview)? How do you think they affect other LGBT people or families with LGBT people?
  - What can you do to educate your peers about the history of anti-LGBT language?

**Part III: Conclusion (10 minutes)**

12. Cut apart the quotes in *Youth Voices on “That’s So Gay.”* Ask for nine volunteers and provide each with a quote.
13. Tell students that they will be hearing the thoughts of LGBT teens on how expressions such as “that’s so gay” impact them. Direct students to listen and reflect silently as each quote is read. Ask the volunteers to stand and read their quotes in succession.
14. Allow students to react to the quotes (e.g., which quote do you connect with the most?). Suggest that they think about these teens the next time they are tempted to use anti-LGBT words.

**DICTIONARY PRINT AD: “GAY”**

**gay** (gā) **1.** there once was a time when all “gay” meant was “happy.” then it meant “homosexual.” now, people are saying “that’s so gay” to mean dumb and stupid. which is pretty insulting to gay people (and we don’t mean the “happy” people). **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** go to [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)



**DICTIONARY PRINT AD: “FAGGOT”**

**fag-got** (fag'ət) **1.** there was a time when the word “faggot” meant a bundle of sticks. but then people started using it in an insulting, offensive way and things changed. so when you say things like “homo,” “dyke” and “that’s so gay” trying to be funny, remember, you may actually be hurting someone. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** get more information at [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)



## DICTIONARY PRINT AD: “DYKE”

**dyke** (dīk) **1.** be honest with yourself. you’re not thinking of “an embankment that holds back and controls water.” the problem is, words like “dyke” and “faggot” are so commonly used as insults these days, it’s really hard to remember a time when they weren’t. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** learn more at [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)



## THE HISTORY OF THE WORD “GAY”

The word *gay* dates back to the 12th century and comes from the Old French “*gai*,” meaning “full of joy or mirth.” It may also be connected with the Old High German “*gahi*,” meaning impulsive. For centuries, *gay* was used commonly in speech and literature to mean happy, carefree, bright and showy, and did not take on any sexual meaning until the 1600s.

At that time the meaning of *gay* as carefree evolved to imply that a person was unrestrained by morals and prone to decadence and promiscuity. A prostitute might have been described as a “*gay woman*” and a womanizer as a “*gay man*.” “*Gay house*” was commonly used to refer to a brothel and, later, “*gaiety*” was used as a common name for certain places of entertainment.

In the 1890s, the term “*gey cat*” (a Scottish variant of *gay*) was used to describe a vagrant who offered sexual services to women, or a young traveler who was new to the road and in the company of an older man. This latter use suggests that the younger man was in a sexually submissive role and may be among the first times that *gay* was used to imply a homosexual relationship.

In 1951, *gay* appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary for the first time as slang for homosexual, but was most likely used in this way “underground” at least 30 years earlier. For example, in the 1938 film, *Bringing Up Baby*, Cary Grant dons a feathery robe when his clothes are sent to the cleaners and says, “...I just went *gay*.” This line (ad-libbed by Grant) can be interpreted to mean that he was behaving in a happy-go-lucky or lighthearted way, but is accepted by many as the first use of *gay* to mean homosexual in a mainstream movie.

Today *gay* is a socially accepted term for homosexual people. However, this word is rooted in the classification of certain types of people as illicit, counterculture or behaving in ways that go against the respectable conventions of society. When *gay* is used today to mean stupid or undesirable (it has only been used in this way since the 1990s), it carries with it a history of negative judgment and rigid ideas about who or what is acceptable.

**gay** (gā) 1. there once was a time when all “*gay*” meant was “happy.” then it meant “homosexual.” now, people are saying “that’s so *gay*” to mean dumb and stupid. which is pretty insulting to *gay* people (and we don’t mean the “happy” people). 2. so please, knock it off. 3. go to [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)

Ad  
Good

GLSEN



## THE HISTORY OF THE WORD “FAGGOT”

You may know that “faggot” means “a bundle of sticks.” The word “faggot” has been part of the English language since the 1300s. When and how did it become an anti-gay slur?

During the European Inquisitions, “faggot” referred to the sticks used to set fires for burning heretics, or people who opposed the teachings of the Catholic Church. Heretics were required to gather bundles of sticks (“faggots”) and carry them to the fire that was being built for them.

Heretics who changed their beliefs to avoid being killed were forced to wear a “faggot” design embroidered on their sleeve, to show everyone that they had opposed the Church. Since it was hard to live with such a bad reputation, people began to use the word “faggot” to refer to anything that was considered to be a burden or difficult to bear. Unfortunately, the term quickly became a sexist insult, as people used it to disrespect women in the same way the term “ball and chain” is used today.

The word “faggot” appeared in the United States during the early 20th century. It was used to refer to men who were seen as less masculine than people believed they should be. During the course of the 20th century, the word “faggot” became the slur most commonly used to abuse gay men and men perceived to be gay. In fact, “faggot” has become a general insult that is often used to humiliate any man. Since many people are biased against LGBT people, being called “faggot” is a big fear of many heterosexual men, and thus the easiest way to hurt them. Considering the long and violent history of the word, it’s important for people to understand its meaning before they use it so carelessly.

**fag-got** (fag'ət) **1.** there was a time when the word “faggot” meant a bundle of sticks. but then people started using it in an insulting, offensive way and things changed. so when you say things like “homo,” “dyke” and “that’s so gay” trying to be funny, remember, you may actually be hurting someone. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** get more information at [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)

Ad  
COVE

GLSEN



## THE HISTORY OF THE WORD “DYKE”

“Dyke” is a very old word. You may have encountered it already in a science class; it’s a mass of mineral matter that fills a hole in a rock formation. Or, you may have seen it in a geography lesson; it refers to a variety of ditches, trenches, caves and dams that have been built by many different civilizations. None of these definitions, however, relates to the modern usage of “dyke” as a slur directed at lesbian women or women perceived to be lesbian.

One theory about the origin of “dyke” as an anti-lesbian slur suggests that “dyke” came from the word “hermaphrodite,” which used to be a very common term describing people born with ambiguous sex characteristics. When the word “hermaphrodite” was more commonly used, popular variations such as “morphodite” and “morphodike” sprang up. Some people believe that “dyke” came from “morphodike” and was used to reinforce the stereotype that all lesbians look and act like men.

Early British history provides another theory about the origin of the word “dyke.” Boudicca (pronounced “bou-dikka”) was a chieftain/queen in the Iceni tribe in Britain during the 1st century C.E. At the death of her husband, according to his will, Boudicca was given control of the tribe. But the Romans, who were occupying Britain, did not recognize the will of Boudicca’s husband, and seized his land and property, flogging Boudicca and raping her two daughters in the process. Boudicca then led a victorious armed revolt against the Romans, but they ultimately countered the attack and slaughtered many Iceni.

No matter which theory is the most accurate, all point to the word “dyke” having its roots in beliefs about how women are supposed to look and act. Women who have refused to conform to society’s expectations of them often have been labeled as “dykes,” whether or not they have identified as lesbians.

**dyke** (dīk) **1.** be honest with yourself. you’re not thinking of “an embankment that holds back and controls water.” the problem is, words like “dyke” and “faggot” are so commonly used as insults these days, it’s really hard to remember a time when they weren’t. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** learn more at [ThinkB4YouSpeak.com](http://ThinkB4YouSpeak.com)

Ad

GLSEN

## YOUTH VOICES ON “THAT’S SO GAY”

1. “If you mean ‘that’s so stupid,’ why don’t you just say ‘that’s stupid’? It’s really degrading to hear ‘gay’ being used as the new ‘stupid.’” (Austin, age 15, CA)
2. “If we aren’t supposed to say ‘that’s retarded’ because it’s offensive, how is ‘that’s so gay’ any less offensive?” (Michael, age 17, KS)
3. “I get so angry when someone says, ‘that’s so gay.’ I can’t imagine how, well, unclever someone has to be to use that phrase. I wish people were more aware of what they say.” (Adrien, age 16, WI)
4. “[When people say ‘that’s so gay,] I don’t get angry, they don’t mean it in a hateful way. They just say it because others do, and they don’t even know what they’re saying anymore, or who they’re hurting.” (Tyler, age 15, NC)
5. “When I hear ‘that’s so gay,’ I think...that’s so ignorant!” (Chris, age 15, OH)
6. “When I hear ‘that’s so gay,’ a chill rushes through my body and my heart drops into the pit of my stomach.” (Kaitlyn, age 17, MI)
7. “When I hear ‘that’s so gay,’ I get tightness in my chest. Sometimes when I hear it from several people in a large group, I get a rush of anxiety. Hearing that can really ruin my day.” (Ayanna, age 16, GA)
8. “[When I hear ‘that’s so gay,] I feel demoralized, as if the world does not care about others.” (David, age 16, VA)
9. “If I were to tell you how ‘that’s so gay’ makes me feel, would you continue saying it?” (Nate, age 17, NV)

# Lesson 3 – In-Group, Out-Group: The Exclusion of LGBT People from Societal Institutions

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

### Time

Parts I and II: 50 mins.  
Part III: at least 30 mins.

### Grade Level

Grades 8 & up

### Strategies and Skills

analyzing images, brainstorming, case study, connecting past to present, cooperative group work, creating visual art, critical thinking, debate, examining historical photographs, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, listening skills, reading skills, writing skills

### Key Words and Phrases

amend, avowed, civil union, commitment, conflict, constitution, Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), discharge, dissent, domestic partnership, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” discrimination, exclusion, First Amendment, gender identity, heterosexism, homophobia, inclusion, LGBT, marriage equality, prejudice, racism, sexual orientation, systematic

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore the concept of exclusion on personal and societal levels. After participating in an exercise in which they experience the effects of inclusion/exclusion in a social situation, students do reflective writing in response to historical photographs depicting the exclusion of various groups in society. In the final part of the lesson, students identify ways in which LGBT people are currently excluded from societal institutions, listen to interviews of LGBT people describing their experiences with discrimination and create portraits of the interview subjects that reflect what they have learned.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on the ways in which individuals and groups are included/excluded on personal and societal levels.
- Students will learn about the experiences of racial, ethnic and religious groups that have experienced exclusion historically.
- Students will increase their awareness about the ways in which LGBT people are currently included/excluded from societal institutions.

## LESSON PREPARATION

### Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- *Inclusive and Exclusive LGBT Policies* (one copy)
- Copies of the following student readings, found in the background materials at [www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices): *Kendall Bailey, James Dale and David Wilson* (one per student in each small group; see steps #12-13)

Other Materials: Unheard Voices interviews and background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)), chart paper, markers, note paper, pens/pencils, masking tape, art supplies, SMART Board or computer/projector/screen, speakers

### Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Chart the discussion questions in step #7.
- Prepare to show PowerPoints (see steps #7, 10 and 12).
- Prepare to play audio interviews (see step #13).
- Gather art supplies for creating portraits (see step #13).

## PROCEDURES

### Part I: How Does it Feel to be Excluded? (20 minutes)

1. Ask for volunteers, one for each 5–6 members of the group. Instruct the volunteers to wait outside the room until you ask them to come in. Close the door so that the volunteers cannot hear the conversation inside the room.

---

**NOTE:** These volunteers will participate in an exercise in which they experience how it feels to be excluded. Select students who will not feel distressed by this simulation.

---

2. Instruct the remaining students to form circles with 5–6 people in each circle, standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Explain to the group that their goal is to keep the volunteers from becoming a part of their circle using any means possible except physical contact. Suggest that groups pick a subject and begin talking in a lively manner about the topic as volunteers return and try to join their circle.
3. Go to the volunteers and explain that when they go inside, their goal is to become part of one of the circles. Bring them into the room and assign each to a different circle. Allow 2–3 minutes for the interaction.
4. Instruct students to return to their seats and lead a discussion using some of the following questions:
  - If you were excluded from the group, how did it feel? What strategies did you use to try to get into the group? As time went on, did you feel like more like giving up or trying harder?
  - If you were part of the “in group,” how did that feel? What strategies did you use to keep the volunteers out? What were the benefits and costs of excluding others?
  - In real life, is there anything wrong with wanting to hang out with “your group” and exclude others? Explain your thinking.
  - In your experience, what are the reasons that some people are included or excluded?
  - How do patterns of including and excluding behavior affect the climate at school?
  - How do you think this exercise or theme relates to the way people are treated in the broader society?

### Part II: Social Group Exclusion Historically (30 minutes)

5. Tell students that – bearing in mind what exclusion feels like when it occurs on a social level – you would like them to consider the impact and consequences when groups are excluded systematically on a society-wide level.
6. Explain that fear and prejudice has led to the organized exclusion of various groups from jobs, housing, goods, services and opportunities throughout history. Tell students that you will be displaying some images that illustrate this exclusion, and that they will be doing some brief reflective writing in response to one of the images.

7. Play the *Images of Exclusion* PowerPoint through once and instruct students to select one image for reflection. Post the prompts below and direct students to write a paragraph or two in response to one of the questions (you can either assign a third of the class to each question or allow students to choose). Emphasize that students should write in the voice (i.e., from the perspective) of the person identified in the question. Allow 10-15 minutes for students to write.
- Imagine you are an individual from the targeted group coming across this sign/ad. What are your thoughts and feelings? What impact does it have on you?
  - Imagine you are the person who posted the sign/ad. What motivated you to do so, and what thoughts or feelings do you experience as you post it?
  - Imagine that you are a member of the group responsible for the sign/ad (but not the actual person who posted it). What is your reaction and how do you respond (if at all)?

---

**Optional:** Play the PowerPoint on a continuous loop while students write. The presentation has been set up so that slides advance automatically every ten seconds. Click on the Slide Show/Set Up and Transitions tabs to adjust settings or turn them on/off.

---

8. Ask for several volunteers to read their reflections aloud. Process them using some of the following questions.
- Why did the image you selected stand out to you? How did it make you feel?
  - Why did you decide to write in the voice/from the perspective that you selected?
  - Where and when do you think signs like these existed? Why do you think these groups were targeted in that time/place?
  - What do you think was the impact of this type of discrimination on the targeted groups? On the broader community?

---

**NOTE:** Information about the images (date, photographer, location, etc.) is listed in the “Notes” section of each slide. For some of the images, limited or no source information is available.

---

### **Part III: Exclusion of LGBT people in Contemporary Times (at least 30 minutes)**

9. Ask students if they think that images like the ones they viewed in the previous exercise – and the policies they represent – exist in today’s world and, if so, where and targeted at whom.
10. If students have not already identified LGBT people, suggest that this group is the frequent target of exclusionary policies. Display slide 2 of *The Struggle for LGBT Inclusion* PowerPoint (“Welcome to California”). Ask students what thoughts or feelings this image elicits and allow a few moments for them to react.
11. Comment that while signposts like this don’t literally exist (this one was Photoshopped to protest challenges to same-sex marriage in CA), the policies it represents do. Ask students to brainstorm some of the ways in which LGBT people are currently engaged in struggles for inclusive laws, policies and practices, and chart their responses (see *Inclusive and Exclusive LGBT Policies* to supplement student responses).

12. Tell students that they will be listening to an audio interview of a gay person who has experienced exclusion from a major institution due to his sexual orientation. Provide brief overviews of the interview subjects using slides 3-5 of *The Struggle for LGBT Inclusion* PowerPoint.
13. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students and have each group select one of the interview subjects. Provide each group with the appropriate interview and accompanying background reading (see [www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)). Instruct groups to do the following:
  - Listen to their interview.
  - Read and discuss the backgrounder as a group.
  - Create a portrait (a visual depiction or representation) of their subject that reflects what they have learned. The portrait doesn't have to literally resemble the subject, but should exhibit prominent themes from the interview and reading. The portrait may be drawn or fashioned from items including newspaper headlines, Web images, quotes and personal reflections.

---

**Optional:** If time is limited, skip the assignment to create a portrait or assign it as homework. If the small group structure of this activity is challenging, play one or more of the interviews to the whole class as time allows, and read/discuss the backgrounders as a large group.

---

14. Reconvene the class and display the portraits at the front of the room. Have each group describe the design and major themes of their portrait. Allow students to share their reactions and questions to the various portraits. Reinforce the importance of working toward laws, practices and policies that include rather than exclude people from society's major institutions.

## INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE LGBT POLICIES

LGBT people and their allies are engaged in many efforts to secure inclusive laws, policies and practices. Below is a brief summary of some of the ways in which LGBT people are included in and excluded from important societal institutions and practices.

TOPIC	INCLUSIVE POLICIES	EXCLUSIVE POLICIES
<b>Marriage</b>	6 states and D.C. provide full marriage equality for same-sex couples, and 11 other states offer protections short of marriage.	24 states have constitutional amendments limiting marriage to one man and one woman; the Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) also defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
<b>Parenting</b>	15 states and D.C. allow same-sex couples to jointly petition to adopt.	Same-sex couples are prohibited from adopting in Mississippi and Utah (and in many states the status of parenting law for LGBT people is unclear).
<b>Workplace</b>	21 states have laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation	29 states do not have laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation.
<b>School</b>	13 states have non-discrimination laws that explicitly protect LGBT students from discrimination in schools; 13 states prohibit bullying and harassment of students based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity; 1 state (CA) has a law mandating inclusion of LGBT topics in the curriculum.	37 states do not have non-discrimination laws that explicitly protect LGBT students from discrimination in schools; 37 states do not have enumerated laws that prohibit bullying and harassment of students based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity; 8 states have laws limiting or prohibiting instruction on LGBT topics.
<b>Clubs</b>	LGBT people are not restricted from leadership positions in Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., which has no membership policies on sexual orientation or gender identity.	The Boy Scouts of America prohibits “avowed homosexuals” from leadership roles in its Scouting programs.
<b>Military</b>	In 2010 the U.S. government repealed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” allowing gay and lesbian people to serve openly in the armed forces.	
<b>Blood Donations</b>		The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prohibits blood donations from gay men (specifically any male donor who has had sex with another man from 1977 to the present).
<b>Religion</b>	Many faith communities welcome LGBT members and do not consider homosexuality to be a sin, including Reform Judaism, the Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church. The Presbyterian and Episcopal movements allow ordination of openly gay pastors/priests, and the Episcopalals also bless same-sex unions.	Many of the world’s major religions prohibit LGBT people from openly participating as congregants, marrying within the faith and/or serving as clergy (e.g., Orthodox Judaism, the Roman Catholic Church, Islam, the Methodist Church, the American Baptist Church and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among others).

*Chart last updated September 2011*

# Lesson 4 – Winning the Right to Marry: Historical Parallels

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

### Time

75-90 mins. or  
2 class periods

### Grade Level

Grades 8 & up

### Strategies and Skills

analyzing primary documents, analyzing oral histories, brainstorming, connecting past to present, cooperative group work, critical thinking, debate, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, reading skills, writing skills

### Key Words and Phrases

attribute, civil marriage, civil union, constitutional/unconstitutional, discrimination, DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), domestic partnership, interracial, invalidate, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), mandate, plaintiff, refuge, sexual orientation, void

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore marriage bans for same-sex couples within the context of earlier prohibitions, and use these historical parallels to determine the fairness of current restrictions. Students listen to the story of an individual who was personally affected by marriage restrictions and fought to change the law in his state. They then analyze existing state and federal laws concerning same-sex marriage, and consider whether or not these laws are in need of change.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore past injustices within the institution of marriage.
- Students will identify marriage attributes that can be used in considering past and present challenges to marriage law.
- Students will reflect on the personal testimony of an individual involved in the movement for marriage rights.
- Students will increase their knowledge about existing state and federal marriage laws.
- Students will consider the fairness or unfairness of current marriage laws and begin to develop a personal stance on the issue.

## LESSON PREPARATION

### Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- (Optional) *To Be Equal: The Journey of David Wilson* (one per student)
- *Winning the Freedom to Marry: Progress in the States* (one per small group)
- *The Defense of Marriage Act* (one per small group)

Other Materials: Unheard Voices interviews and background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)), chart paper, markers, masking tape, computer, speakers,

### Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare the statements in steps # 1 and 2.
- Prepare to play interview (see step # 6).
- Print out copies of your state's marriage law (see step # 9).



## PROCEDURES

---

**NOTE:** Same-sex marriage is a topic that engenders strong feelings on both sides of the debate. For guidelines on how to maintain a respectful and constructive atmosphere while discussing this issue, see *Discussing Marriage of Same-Sex Couples with Students* (available as part of the online version of this lesson at [www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/unheard-voices)).

---

### Part I: Defining the Attributes of Marriage (30 minutes)

1. Post the following statements:

- *“All [such] marriages shall be absolutely void without any decree of divorce or other legal process.”*
- *Such marriages are “unnatural.”*
- *“Almighty God...did not intend for [such people] to mix.”*

Inform the students that the statements come from various rulings by judges on cases involving marriage. Ask them to venture some guesses as to which group of people the statements refer.

2. After some speculation, inform students that the statements reflect decisions about interracial marriage that were prevalent until relatively recent times. Share the full text of the above quotes with students:

- *“All marriages between a white person and a colored person shall be absolutely void without any decree of divorce or other legal process.” (Va. Code Ann. 20-57, 1960)*
- *Racial intermarriage is “unnatural,” and would lead to children who are “generally sickly, and effeminate...and inferior in physical development and strength.” (Scott v. Georgia, 39 Ga. 321, 323, 1869)*
- *Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.” (Loving, 388 U.S. at 3, 1958)*

3. Allow some time for students to react to these statements. Point out that at one time 40 states forbade the marriage of a white person to a person of color and it was not until 1948 that California became the first state to declare unconstitutional a ban on interracial marriage. Add that in the landmark 1967 case, *Loving v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court finally struck down the remaining interracial marriage laws across the country and declared that the freedom to marry is a “basic civil right.”

4. Ask students if they think that racial sameness is a necessary or important attribute of a good marriage (most will likely reject this notion). Tell students that you would like them to come up with more appropriate attributes of marriage. Form small groups of 3-5 students, ask each to select a recorder and provide each with a sheet of chart paper and a marker. Instruct each group to brainstorm a list of marriage attributes – not legal standards, but qualities they think form the basis for a sound marriage (e.g., emotional compatibility, demonstration of love,

commitment over time, economic interdependence, etc.). Allow 10 minutes for groups to work.

5. Reconvene the class and have groups post their lists. Together create a master class list that reflects the major attributes from all groups. If there is disagreement amongst students, try to reach some consensus and then display the class criteria.

## **Part II: Exploring Marriage of Same-Sex Couples (45-60 minutes)**

6. Inform students that in recent years another group of Americans has turned to the courts in order to secure the freedom to marry – same-sex couples. Tell them that you are going to play an interview ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)) of someone who has been involved in that struggle. Provide the following introduction:

*David Wilson and his partner, Rob Compton, were two of the plaintiffs in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, the landmark case that awarded marriage equality to same-sex couples in Massachusetts. Ten years before the lawsuit, David Wilson was living with his first partner, Ronald Loso, outside of Boston, until November 29, 1994. Here, Wilson remembers that day.*

7. After playing the interview, provide additional context by sharing information from the handout, *To Be Equal: The Journey of David Wilson*, or providing a copy to students and reading it together as a class. Process David's story using the discussion questions (found in the background materials) that accompany the interview.
8. Point out that while David won the right to marry in Massachusetts, millions of gay Americans today are denied the right to marry in the states where they reside. Ask students if they know what the status of same-sex marriage is in their state and if they are aware of the federal government's policy on this issue.
9. Tell students that, in small groups, they will have the opportunity to discuss the current status of same-sex marriage and their opinions about existing laws. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students and have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Provide each group with a sheet of chart paper, a marker and one copy of the following materials:
  - *The Defense of Marriage Act*
  - *Winning the Freedom to Marry: Progress in the States*
  - Your state's law (if one exists) on same-sex marriage or partner recognition (see, for example, [www.freedomtomarry.org](http://www.freedomtomarry.org), [www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org) or [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org))
10. Instruct groups to collaboratively review the handouts and to also consider David Wilson's story and the class list of marriage attributes brainstormed earlier. Based on this information, have groups discuss their opinions on the Defense of Marriage Act and their state's law. Have groups record any changes that they would make to existing laws based on their conversation. Allow 20-30 minutes for groups to work.
11. Reconvene the class and have each group post its chart at the front of the room. Ask each reporter to share one or two highlights from their group's conversation. Engage students in a discussion using some of the following questions:

- Do same-sex couples have the capacity to reflect the attributes on the class list?
- Is there a justification for the definition of marriage as the union between one man and one woman?
- Should government have the right to determine who can and cannot marry based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or any other factor?
- Is it right for a state to invalidate marriages performed legally in other states?

---

**NOTE:** Some students may suggest that there are religious justifications for opposing same-sex marriage. Without passing judgment on any student’s religious beliefs, make sure to clarify the difference between civil and religious marriage for the purposes of this discussion. Share, for example, the following explanation from the New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Education Fund ([www.nhfreedomtomarry.org/comparison.html](http://www.nhfreedomtomarry.org/comparison.html)): “There are two types of marriage – civil marriage and religious marriage. Couples may have one or both types of marriage: a civil marriage if they meet the government’s requirements; and a religious marriage if they meet the requirements of their faith tradition. However, to receive the legal protections of marriage, a couple must have a civil marriage. The debate over the freedom to marry is about the right to enter into a state-created institution of civil marriage only. Even after civil marriage becomes available to gay and lesbian couples, no court decision or legislative enactment can change the basic tenets of a religious faith.”

---

12. **Optional:** For homework or as an in-class follow-up assignment, have students write an essay in which they discuss the quote below and why they agree or disagree with the author’s point of view.

*“Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the ‘wrong kind of person’ for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people’s religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people’s civil rights.”*

- Mildred Loving, plaintiff in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), the U.S. Supreme Court case that struck down interracial marriage bans

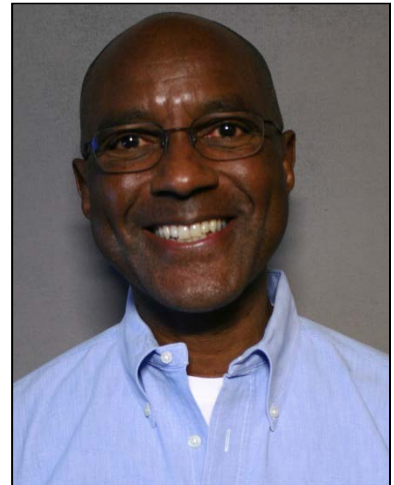
## TO BE EQUAL: THE JOURNEY OF DAVID WILSON

One evening, as he returned home from work, [David Wilson] found his partner lying on the ground in their driveway. He called his neighbors for help. They called 911, and when the police arrived they proceeded to arrest David assuming, that because he was black, he was breaking and entering and had assaulted the man on the ground.

“Before anything could go any further, my neighbors came to my defense and told them that we were a couple, and that they needed to find out what was going on with my partner.”

At that point, the police released him, but what would take place at the hospital still leaves David shaky-voiced.

“They wouldn’t give me any information because they did not recognize our relationship. They called my partner’s 75-year-old mother who lived in Vermont, and she gave them permission to tell me his condition. They told me that he had suffered a massive heart attack and was dead on arrival.”



In that moment, David had to quickly come to terms with an unfortunate circumstance of being gay: there was no legal mandate acknowledging his right to medical information about his partner.

“I had never considered the problem with relationship rights until that moment. I had a lot to think about.”

[David] began reading about gay rights, and joined a group called Gay Fathers of Greater Boston. It was in this group that he met Rob Compton, a father of two who had recently relocated to Massachusetts. Rob had been fired from his job as a dentist in Michigan when he came out as a gay man. He came to Massachusetts seeking refuge under the non-discrimination law that prohibits sexual orientation discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and services. David and Rob came together around their stories. They fell in love, and moved in together.

One morning Rob awoke in excruciating pain. David led him to the car and took him to the same hospital that denied him access to his previous partner’s information. “It was five minutes away from our home. It was the local hospital, and it’s a very good one... I just wanted to get Rob to the hospital,” he explained.

Once again David was led to a waiting area while his partner lay on the other side of the wall in the emergency room. It wasn't déjà vu, it was the sheer reality of the situation: the hospital had to adhere to the law that protects a patient’s right to privacy.

“I tried to describe what had happened to me three years earlier, and the staff didn’t really care. To them, I had no relationship to this man and, unless I could prove that I was related in some way, they would not give me any information.”

Hours later, Rob walked into the waiting room area and sat down next to him. He told David he finally got it. In the emergency room, he was in so much pain he could not answer all of the questions he was asked. He needed David to be there – to hold his hand, comfort him and tell him it was going to be okay – but he wasn’t.

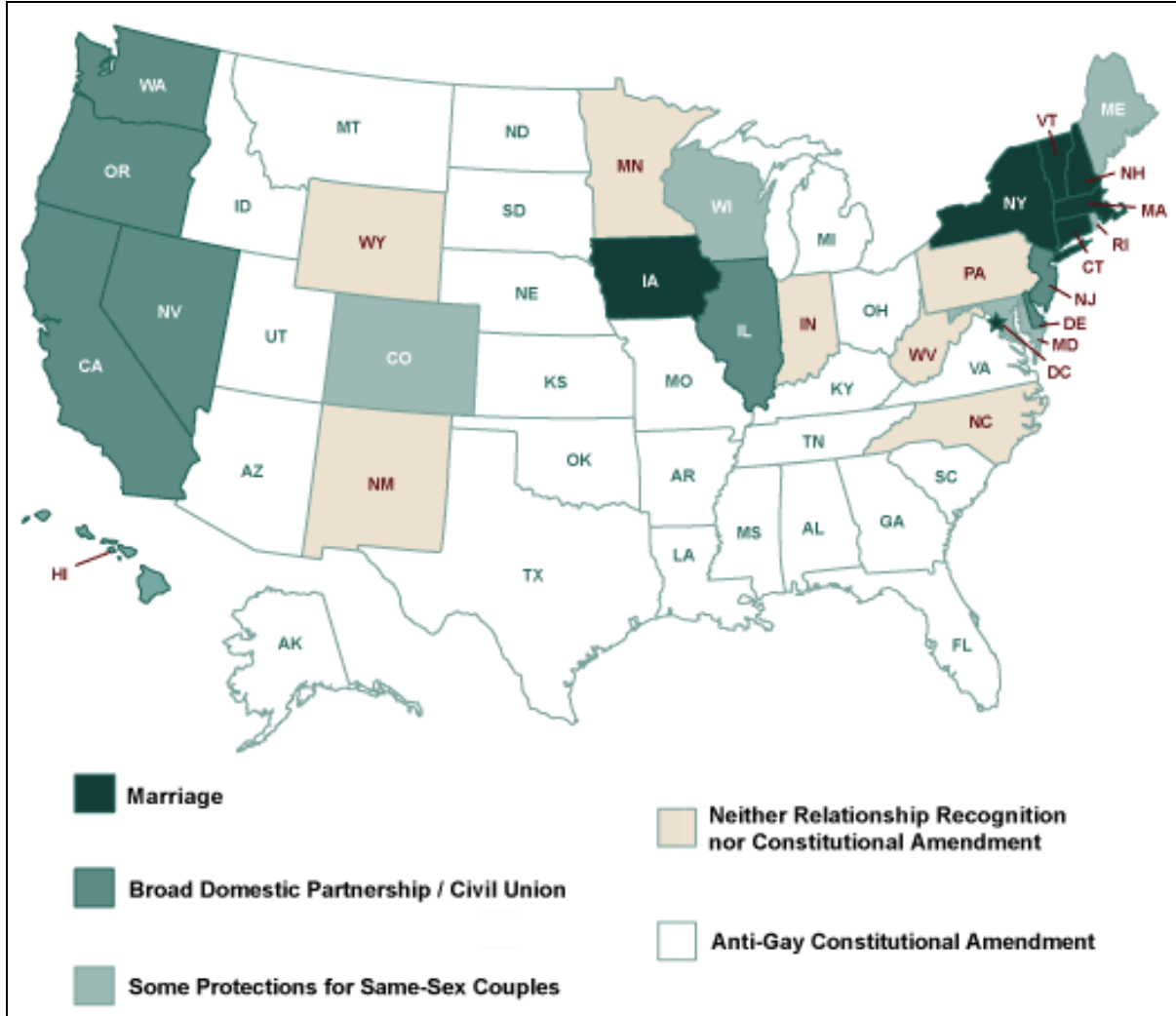
When Rob recovered, the couple moved into the city, seeking a more supportive environment for their relationship. They reached out to the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders group (GLAD). It was perfect timing, GLAD was spearheading a lawsuit against the state that would grant civil marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and was seeking plaintiffs upon whom to rest the case. More than 100 same-sex couples were interviewed and screened; David and Rob were selected along with six other couples to testify. GLAD filed the suit in April of 2001, and on November 18, 2003, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ruled to end the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage in the state.

This historic case, known as *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, guarantees the legal framework of protections and obligations offered in civil marriages to gay and lesbian couples, and their children too. These protections include the joint filing of taxes, the ability to purchase joint policies of insurance, protection through workers compensation and wrongful death actions, the ability to bequeath retirement benefits, economic protections to a surviving spouse and hundreds of other protections that cannot be secured without a marriage license.

David and Rob were among the first same-sex couples to be married on May 17, 2004.

Excerpted from Brown, Bridgit. To Be Equal: The Journey of David Wilson. *Color Magazine*, [http://www.colormagazineusa.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=222%3Ato-be-equal-&catid=53%3Afeature&Itemid=67](http://www.colormagazineusa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=222%3Ato-be-equal-&catid=53%3Afeature&Itemid=67). Reprinted with permission.

## WINNING THE FREEDOM TO MARRY: PROGRESS IN THE STATES



Six states (CT, IA, MA, NH, NY, VT) plus the District of Columbia have the freedom to marry for gay couples, and four states (MD, NM, NY, RI) officially pledge non-discrimination against marriages between same-sex couples from other states. Other states offer broad protections short of marriage, including civil union (HI, IL, NJ), domestic partnership (CA, NV, OR, WA) and smaller packages of protections (CO, MD, ME, WI).

Nearly 14% of the U.S. population lives in a state that either has the freedom to marry for gay couples or honors out-of-state marriages of gay couples. 35% live in a state with either marriage or a broad legal status such as civil union/partnership. More than 42% (over 130 million Americans) live in a state that provides some form of protections for gay couples.

Map last updated June 30, 2011. Reprinted with permission from Freedom to Marry, <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/states>.

## THE DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT (DOMA)

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed by Congress by a vote of 85–14 in the Senate and 342–67 in the House of Representatives, and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on September 21, 1996. Under the law, the federal government maintains that no state has to recognize a same-sex marriage performed in another state and defines marriage as a partnership between a man and woman (“The word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word ‘spouse’ refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife”).

DOMA, together with similar laws in more than 30 states, deny same-sex couples more than 1,000 legal rights enjoyed by married couples in the U.S., many of which cannot be privately arranged or contracted for. Below is a partial list of the benefits that come with legal marriage. Each category is followed by a fictional case study illustrating how same-sex couples are affected by the absence of marriage rights.

**Health Care:** Married couples enjoy health care benefits when they:

- take bereavement or sick leave to care for a partner or child
- visit a partner or child in the hospital and other public institutions
- obtain joint insurance policies for home, auto, and family health
- make medical decisions on a partner’s behalf in the event of illness

*Marta had been living with Sue for two years when she decided to tell her family that she is a lesbian. Her parents told Marta that they would never accept her “lifestyle” and cut off all contact. Several years later, Marta was left in a coma after a bad car accident. The hospital contacted Marta’s parents—her legal next of kin—who made the decision to put Marta in a hospital close to their home and told Sue she could not visit. Sue protested, but was told that since she was not a legal spouse, she had no decision making power.*

**Life Planning:** Married couples enjoy the benefits of life planning when they:

- inherit automatically in the absence of a will
- choose a final resting place for a deceased partner
- receive exemptions from property tax increases upon the death of a partner
- obtain wrongful death benefits for a surviving partner and children

*Sean moved away from his hometown because his family was not accepting of his sexual orientation. He settled in Chicago and fell in love with Marc. Years later Sean developed a form of non-operable cancer. As Sean’s health deteriorated, Marc took a leave of absence from his job to care for Sean. When Sean died a year later, his estranged family arranged for a funeral in their hometown and told Marc not to attend. Because Sean and Marc were not legally married, Marc had no rights to make burial decisions or to inherit Sean’s property.*

**Government Benefits:** Married couples enjoy government benefits when they:

- share Social Security and Medicare income and support
- file joint tax returns and get special marriage or family tax rates
- obtain veterans' discounts on medical care, education and housing loans
- apply for immigration and residency for partners from other countries

*Michael and Rolando shared a home and a life together for three years after meeting in graduate school. After graduation, Rolando's student visa expired and he was notified that he must return to his native Peru. Michael attempted to sponsor his partner, but was denied because the two are not legally married. Rolando is currently facing deportation.*

**Family Recognition:** Married couples benefit from family recognition when they:

- receive shared parenting, adoption, custody and visitation rights
- enter jointly into rental leases on a home or other property
- get legal protection in cases of domestic violence
- secure fair division of property, child custody and support in cases of divorce

*Asha and Tracy lived together for over 15 years, sharing the responsibilities of maintaining their home and raising their son, Tim, now 10. After separating, they could not agree on a custody arrangement and a court battle ensued. Because Asha is the biological parent, the judge ruled that she would receive full custody of Tim and granted no visitation rights to Tracy, despite the fact that she co-raised Tim from birth and Tim's testimony that he loves both of his moms the same.*



# Lesson 5 – Understanding Gender Identity

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

### Time

1½-2 hours or 2-3 class periods

### Grade Level

Grades 10 & up

### Strategies and Skills

analyzing media, brainstorming, case study, connecting past to present, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, listening skills, reading skills, social action, writing skills

### Key Words and Phrases

advocate, ally, assume/assumption, attire, conform, continuum, discrimination, gender expression, gender identity, gender-neutral, harassment, intersex, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), prejudice, sexual orientation, stereotype, transgender, transition, transphobia, transsexual

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson students learn about gender identity and explore the impact of rigid gender role expectations and stereotypes. Using various media – an audio interview and a video of a spoken word performance – transgender people and issues are personalized and clarified for students. Students then discuss real-life scenarios depicting conflicts around gender expression in school settings, and brainstorm ways to be an ally to transgender and gender non-conforming people.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will increase their understanding of concepts related to gender identity.
- Students will learn new vocabulary and clarify their understanding of terminology related to transgender issues.
- Students will increase their awareness about gender related stereotypes and discrimination.
- Students will explore ways to be an ally to others.

## LESSON PREPARATION

### Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- Jamison Green background materials (one copy) and student reading (one per student), at [www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)
- *Hir* by Alysia Harris and Aysha El Shamayleh (one per student)
- *Scenarios: Gender Identity and Expression* (one scenario per small group)
- *How to be an Ally to Transgender People* (one per student)

Other Materials: Unheard Voices interviews and background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)), SMART Board or computer/projector/screen, speakers, chart paper, markers, tape, scissors

### Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare to play audio and video pieces (see steps # 1 and 9).
- Chart definitions, continuum and quote (see steps # 2, 3 and 8).
- Cut *Scenarios* into separate strips (see step # 11).

# PROCEDURES

## Part I: Jamison’s Story (20-40 minutes)

1. Tell students they will listen to an audio interview ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)) and provide the following introduction:

*Jamison Green is an activist and writer who has worked on behalf of transgender men and women for more than 20 years. Jamison transitioned from female to male in 1988. Here, he speaks with his daughter, Morgan Green, about what life was like for him as a child.*

After students have listened, discuss the interview with them using some of the questions included in the accompanying background materials ([www.adl.org/unheard-voices](http://www.adl.org/unheard-voices)).

---

**Optional:** If time allows, have students read and discuss the handout about Jamison Green included in the background materials. This can be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class.

---

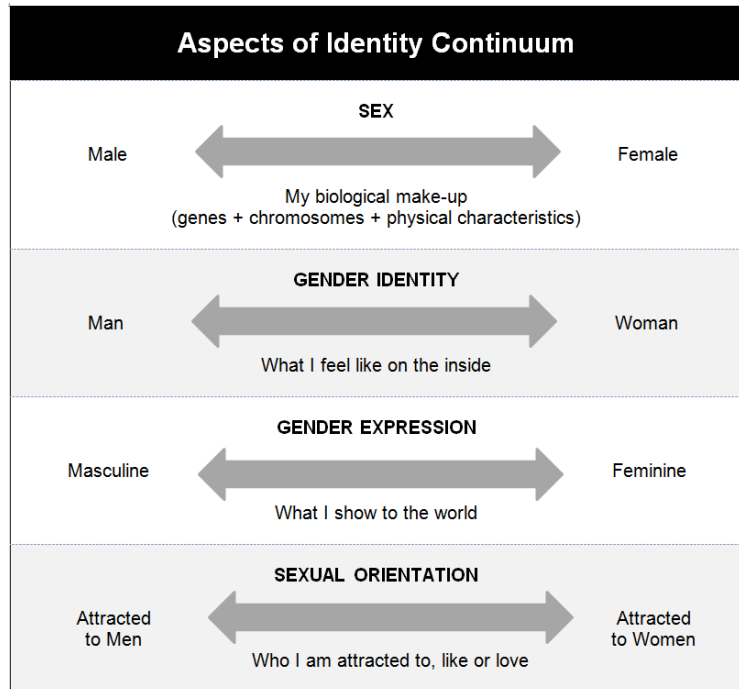
2. Note that the terms transgender and transsexual are both used to refer to Jamison. Clarify that transgender is a broad term that includes transsexual people (i.e., all transsexual people are transgender, but not all transgender people are transsexual). Post and review the following terms and definitions, and make sure that students understand their meaning.
  - **Transgender:** Individuals who feel that their inner sense of being male or female does not match their biological sex; or who express their gender in ways that differ from the social expectations for the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender is a broad term that describes many types of people who do not fit society’s strict definitions of gender and who do not accept a simple two-gender categorization.
  - **Transsexual:** Individuals whose inner sense of being male or female do not match the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Some transsexual people alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This procedure, called a *transition* (formerly “sex change”) is a multi-step process that may take years to complete.

## Part II: Aspects of Identity (15 minutes)

3. Copy the continuum pictured below on a sheet of chart paper or the board, and post where all students can see it.
4. Draw students’ attention to the continuum. Explain that most people understand gender and sexual identity as consisting of two categories – male or female, gay or straight – and that most people feel as though they fit into one of those “boxes.”
5. Point out that for the majority of people, their identities line up along the left or right side of this chart. While pointing to the left side of the chart, tell students that most people born biologically male (sex) feel like a man inside (gender identity), dress and act in a masculine way (gender expression) and are attracted to women (sexual orientation). While pointing to the right side of the chart, tell students that most people born biologically female (sex) feel

like a woman inside (gender identity), dress and act in a feminine way (gender expression) and are attracted to men (sexual orientation).

6. Add that for some people, their identities don't line up as neatly. For example, Jamison Green was born biologically female (sex) but felt like a man inside (gender identity), dressed and acted in a masculine way (gender expression) and was attracted to women (sexual orientation). Conclude that to make things even more complicated, some people don't feel that they fit in either "box," but somewhere in the middle or outside the continuum. For example, some people feel neither male nor female, express themselves in both masculine and feminine ways, or feel attracted to both sexes. In addition, about 1.7% of the population is born *intersex*, with both male and female biological characteristics.



7. Acknowledge that these aspects of our identity are complex and can be confusing. Ask students to silently reflect on where they fit on each continuum, emphasizing that they may find themselves in a different place for each category. Answer any questions students may have and help to clarify any misperceptions about these aspects of identity.

**NOTE:** During this discussion, students should not be asked to disclose any aspect of their identity and should be discouraged from labeling others in any way.

### Part III: The Impact of Rigid Notions about Gender Identity (45-60 minutes)

8. Post or read aloud the following quote from the young adult novel, *Parrotfish*, by Ellen Wittlinger:

*People changed their hair and dieted themselves down to near death. They took steroids to build muscles and got breast implants and nose jobs so they resemble their favorite movie stars. They changed names and majors and jobs and husbands and wives. They changed religions and political parties. They move across the country or the world – even changed nationalities. Why was gender the one sacred thing we weren't supposed to change? Who made that rule?*

Allow students to react to the quote. Ask them what they think the rules are with regard to gender in their community (or society at large), who creates and enforces those rules, and what the consequences are for people who break the rules.

9. Tell students that you will show them the video of a spoken word performance that explores the experience of a transgender student who feels imprisoned by “the rules” of gender. Play *Hir* by Alysia Harris and Aysha El Shamayleh (see note below). Optionally, distribute the handout with the text of the poem as a reference for students. After they have listened, discuss some of the following questions with them.
- Who is Melissa? Why is she described as “not here” and “not what she seems”? Why doesn’t Melissa want to be noticed?
  - Who is James? Why is he described as an “abstract reality”? Why does James go unnoticed by others?
  - Why does Melissa feel “trapped in the flesh of a stranger”? What does she do to try and free herself?
  - How do the people in Melissa’s/James’ environment add to those feelings of being trapped? Is there anything that they could do to lessen those feelings?

---

**NOTE:** The poem, *Hir*, is part of HBO’s Brave New Voices ([www.bravenewvoices.org](http://www.bravenewvoices.org)). As of this writing, the video is available on multiple sites, including [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.dailymotion.com](http://www.dailymotion.com), [www.vbox7.com](http://www.vbox7.com) and [zootool.com](http://zootool.com).

---

10. Following on the last discussion prompt above, highlight that when people express their gender in ways that fall outside community norms, they often face obstacles and resistance. Tell students that they will spend some time considering how some of those barriers might be removed. Divide the class into six groups and have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Provide each group with a sheet of chart paper and a marker.
11. Assign each group a case study from *Scenarios: Gender Identity and Expression* and provide them with the relevant scenario. Explain that these are real-life situations that have been “ripped from the headlines.” Direct each group to read their scenario and discuss the questions below. Have the recorder write down the group’s responses to the third question only. Allow 10-15 minutes for group discussion.
- How was gender expression obstructed by community members or barriers in the physical environment?
  - Were there ways in which gender expression was supported by community members or accommodations in the physical environment?
  - What more could have been done to support gender expression? (Think about people’s behavior, school rules/policies and changes to the environment.)
12. Reconvene the class and post each group’s chart. Have the reporters read aloud their scenario and share some of the ideas they charted. After all groups have shared, ask the class for additional ideas about ways to support gender expression in general and chart their responses.
13. Conclude the lesson by distributing the handout, *How to be an Ally to Transgender People*, and reviewing the points that are most relevant to your community.

## **HIR BY ALYSIA HARRIS AND AYSHA EL SHAMAYLEH**

Melissa sits in the back of the classroom afraid to speak up.  
She pulls awkwardly at her extra loose khaki cargo pants.  
She doesn't want the boys to notice her.  
James finds himself at the back of a classroom.  
His baseball cap casts a shadow on his pimple stained forehead.  
A wide shirt hangs on his broad shoulders,  
But no one ever noticed him.

Melissa,

The teacher asks,  
And she says nothing because she is not here,  
And Melissa has never been here,  
Because Melissa is just some abstract jumble of syllables that doesn't fit her position.  
She is not what she seems,  
She doesn't want to have to explain to her mother for the 232nd time why she doesn't want to wear a dress to prom,  
Doesn't paint her face, it's 'cause her whole body is painted on.

Melissa, Melissa.

James doesn't want to have to explain where he came from,  
'Cause with the exception of Melissa he has been deemed an abstract reality by everyone.  
All he wishes for is to get to wear a tuxedo to prom.  
And Melissa's been tucking in breasts that'll be growing for three years now,  
Been using duct tape to press them down and mold them more into pecs.  
She just wishes that people would understand that at birth her genitals didn't know which way to grow,  
Mad at God who couldn't relay a message directly to her hormones that they should produce more testosterone.  
The only person who understands her is James,  
And they have been playmates since the age of four,  
Around the time girls notice boys and boys notice girls.  
See, James' family wanted daughters instead of sons,  
And Melissa was always like that male beetle that everyone called a ladybug.

Melissa, Melissa, where is she?

Sometimes she wishes she could rip the skin off her back,  
Every moment of everyday she feels trapped in the flesh of a stranger.

Melissa.

As she stands to her feet wanting to say  
“I’m here, and I’ve been here since I was born, so quit asking me if I’m a him or a her,  
'Cause when you combine the two pronouns you get H.I.R, Hir,  
And God combined the two genders and put me in this body transgendered.  
I’m here, so quit talking about me like I’m not here.”  
James falls back into Melissa’s skin,  
And the two comfort each other in syncopated heartbeats,  
Waiting for the day when Melissa can finally scrub off this made up genetic makeup,  
When the teacher asks for James and he can say “I’m here.

---

*Hir by Alysia Harris and Aysha El Shamayleh is part of HBO’s Brave New Voices, [www.bravenewvoices.org](http://www.bravenewvoices.org).*

## SCENARIOS: GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

1. When 17-year-old Ceara– an honor student, trumpet player and goalie on her school’s soccer team in Mississippi – wore a tuxedo for her senior photograph, school officials sent her a letter stating that only boys could wear tuxedos. “I feel like I’m not important,” commented Ceara, “that the school is dismissing who I am as a gay student and that they don’t even care about me. All I want is to be able to be me, and to be included in the yearbook.” Ceara’s mother, who claims there are no regulations about the issue in the student handbook, says, “The tux is who she is. She wears boys’ clothes. She’s athletic. She’s gay. She’s not feminine.”
2. When Justin, an 11th-grader in Florida, showed up at school in female attire – including high heel boots, earrings and make-up – he was called into a meeting with the school principal and asked to leave school for the day. “It wasn’t anything overdramatic,” Justin said of his attire. “It’s an expression of yourself, no matter what. To dress out of your own gender shouldn’t be anything.” Justin’s principal disagreed. “He and I had a conversation about what reaction he would get from peers,” she said. “A decision was made that it would be best for him to go home. This was a group decision after healthy conversation. There was no kind of animosity. Discipline wasn’t the tone of the conversation.” A spokesperson for the school district said school administrators are permitted to call a student out on his dress if they feel his clothing is “inappropriate” and “disrupts the school process.” The County Code of Student Conduct states students must dress “in keeping with their gender.”
3. A family in Maine sued the local school district for discrimination after they prohibited a sixth grade male-to-female transgender student from using the girl’s bathroom. The parents of the child said that she experienced anxiety and depression after school officials forced her to use a gender-neutral bathroom and her peers picked on her. The school stated that they accommodated the child by training the staff, educating the students and giving the transgender student her own bathroom and locker room. This was done in response to reports of mean comments from other students and after one boy followed the transgender student into the girl’s room and harassed her by calling her “faggot.” The family feels that their child should be able to use the bathroom that matches her gender identity without harassment, and that the private bathroom only serves to isolate and alienate her from the other students.
4. Andii said she “was in shock” when she was crowned prom queen at her Florida high school. A transgender student who has gone by the names Andii and Andrew, she says she doesn’t identify completely as either a female or male, and her parents still refer to her as a male. Andii fought to get her name on the prom queen ballot after other students who didn’t feel she had the right to compete started a petition against her. In response to students who say that Andii could run for prom king, she says, “Why would I run for prom king? I’ll have to wear a tux, which I’m not going to do. I’m going to wear an evening gown.” Andii received the most votes over 14 girls for the title at her school.

5. Kevin – who likes to be called “K.K.” – was refused entrance to her senior prom when she arrived wearing a pink ankle-length gown. The Indiana high school senior – who describes herself as “an African-American transgender person whose sex is male but whose expression of gender is female” – filed a lawsuit saying the school trampled on her right to free expression and to be free from discrimination. The lawsuit says that K.K. frequently wore women’s clothing, jewelry and make-up to school, and that nearly all of the students and teachers supported her identity, including when she appeared at pep rallies as a member of the high school drill team. Although K.K. had an assistant principal’s permission to wear a dress to the prom, the school principal said she could only wear a pant-suit. When prom night came, the principal physically blocked K.K. from entering the building. The school district’s attorney stated that the lawsuit “has failed to identify how a male student has a constitutionally protected right to wear a dress to a prom.” K.K.’s attorney stated, “What should have been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for [K.K.] to share memories with friends before graduation became an episode in humiliation and exclusion.”
  
6. Aaron, a senior at a New Jersey university, started transitioning from female to male during high school. As college approached, Aaron felt concerned he would have difficulty living with a female roommate since he does not identify as a female despite what his records indicate. After contacting the school’s Residence Life office, Aaron was placed in a double converted into a single in a dorm known for being a safe place for LGBT students. Aaron said he spent most of his first year alone. “When you’re gender non-conforming, it’s very easy to keep the door shut.” Despite keeping to himself, when some in Aaron’s building found out about his gender identity, they reacted negatively. Aaron says it is often difficult for transgender students to feel accepted. On campus, he has experienced verbal abuse. “It’s kind of a daily fear that you live with.” Aaron now advocates for gender-neutral housing, where men and women can reside together if they choose. More than 50 U.S. universities currently have gender-neutral residence hall options.



## HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

1. Don't assume you can tell what gender a person is, what bathroom they belong in or what pronoun they go by simply by appearance. Avoid assigning labels, identities or categories to people based on your perceptions or what you've heard from others.
2. Use pronouns that reflect people's gender presentation, not their biological sex (e.g., use "he" for someone born female but who identifies and expresses himself as male). If you are uncertain which pronoun to use, ask in a respectful way. Be aware that some people prefer gender neutral pronouns (hir instead of his/her; sie or zi instead of he/she). Never call transgender people "it," "he-she," "she-male" or other insulting names.
3. Use gender-neutral language when possible, such as partner or spouse instead of boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife; and try to opt for terms like police officer or member of Congress rather than policeman or Congressman.
4. Be aware of evolving language around gender and try to use the most current and respectful terms. For example, cross-dresser (not transvestite), intersex (not hermaphrodite) and transition (not sex-change) are preferable.
5. Don't ask transgender people their "real name," birth-assigned name or ask to see photos of them as a boy (if they now identify as female) or a girl (if they now identify as male). Transgender people should not be expected to satisfy your curiosity about their past.
6. Don't describe transgender people as trendy, exotic or cool, even if you mean it as a compliment. Transgender people are simply trying to live as their true selves. No person should ever be made to feel like a curiosity, freak or token.
7. Don't assume that transgender people are gay or lesbian, or that they transition to become straight. Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate identities. Transgender people may be gay, bisexual or straight, just like anyone else.
8. Don't assume anything about a transgender person's transition process. Some people take hormones or get surgery as part of their process, but many don't. In any case, transition is a personal subject, and information about anatomy and sexuality should be considered private.
9. Avoid questioning or policing other people's restroom usage or choices. Since restrooms are often the site of harassment, challenge negative remarks from others and offer to escort a transgender friend to the bathroom if that will provide an extra level of safety.

10. Never gossip about or share the identity of a transgender person, even if you think their status is evident. Coming out is a personal process that should be determined by the individual rather than spread through rumor. If a friend comes out to you, be open, supportive and non-judgmental.
11. Challenge your own ideas about gender roles and expectations by reading, talking to others and educating yourself. Think expansively about gender and be open to new ideas and ways of thinking about the issue.
12. Don't stand for jokes or rude remarks about transgender people. Challenge prejudice in yourself and others, and show friendship and support to those who are targeted by transphobia.
13. Work to change the policies and the environment in your school or community to be more transgender-friendly. Advocate for safe restrooms and locker rooms, inclusive language on forms and records, anti-bullying and other policies that include gender identity, and school traditions (e.g., yearbook, prom) that don't discriminate on the basis of gender expression.

# DEFINITIONS RELATED TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

## **Anti-LGBT Bias**

Prejudice and/or discrimination against people who are or who are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

## **Biological Sex**

The biological and physiological characteristics of males and females. These are characteristics people are born with that do not usually change over the course of their lives. Although sex is typically defined as being male or female, in actuality, there are more than two sexes. About 1.7% of the population is intersexual—born with male and female biological aspects in varying degrees.

## **Coming Out (of the Closet)**

To be “in the closet” means to hide one’s identity. Many LGBT people are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others. To “come out” is to publicly declare one’s identity, sometimes to one person in conversation, sometimes to a group or in a public setting. Coming out is a life-long process. In each new situation, a person must decide whether or not to come out. Coming out can be difficult for some because reactions vary from complete acceptance and support to disapproval, rejection and violence.

## **Gender**

The socially-defined rules and roles for men and women in a society. The attitudes, customs and values associated with gender are socially constructed; however, individuals develop their gender identities in two primary ways: through an innate sense of their own identity and through their life experiences and interactions with others. Western society generally defines gender as a binary system — male and female — but other cultures define gender as more fluid and existing along a continuum.

## **Gender Expression**

Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice and emphasizing, de-emphasizing, or changing their bodies’ characteristics. Gender expression is not an indicator of sexual orientation.

## **Gender Identity**

One’s innermost concept of being male or female (regardless of biological sex), including how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Gender identity is developed through an innate sense of one’s own identity and the internalization of common values that are socially, historically and culturally determined by a given society. Most people’s gender identities match their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological sex. In general, consciousness of gender identity emerges between the ages of 18 months and 3 years.

**Gender Role**

The set of roles and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. U.S. culture recognizes two basic gender roles: **masculine** (having the qualities attributed to males) and **feminine** (having the qualities attributed to females).

**Heterosexism**

Conscious or unconscious bias based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm. Heterosexism can also be understood as the assumption that a dual gender role system based on birth-assigned sex is natural and desirable.

**Homophobia/Transphobia**

The fear or hatred of LGBT people, both directed at others, but also within oneself (*internalized oppression*).

**Internalized Oppression**

The way in which oppressed people come to believe, accept or live out the inaccurate stereotypes and misinformation about their group.

**Intersex**

Individuals with biological and physiological characteristics that are not exclusively male or female as defined by the medical establishment. Although being intersex does not necessarily present medical risks, medical practitioners and family members tend to assign intersex children one sex (male or female). Although many undergo cosmetic surgery to conform to society's idea of "normal," such procedures can damage reproductive organs and emotionally scar children by forcing on them a gender and/or sex role that may feel unnatural to them.

**LGBT (or GLBT)**

Acronym that groups lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals into one group based on their common experience as targets of heterosexism and their common struggle for sexual and gender freedom. This term is generally considered a more inclusive and affirming descriptor than the more limited "gay" or "homosexual."

**Queer**

Historically a negative term used against people perceived to be LGBT, "queer" has more recently been reclaimed by some people as a positive term describing all those who do not conform to rigid notions of gender and sexuality. Queer is often used in a political context and in academic settings to challenge traditional ideas about identity (referred to as "queer theory").

**Questioning**

Refers to people who are uncertain about their sexual orientation or gender identity. They are often seeking information and support during this stage of their identity development.

## **Sexism**

Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on their real or perceived sex. Sexism is based on a belief (conscious or unconscious) that there is a natural order based on sex.

## **Sexual Identity**

How individuals perceive and define themselves with regard to their sexual orientation. Such labels include “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “bi,” “queer,” “questioning,” “heterosexual,” “straight,” and others. Sexual identity evolves through a developmental process that varies depending on the individual. Sexual behavior and identity (self-definition) can be chosen.

## **Sexual Orientation**

Determined by one’s sexual and emotional attractions. Categories of sexual orientation include **homosexuals** — gay, lesbian — attracted to some members of the same sex; **bisexuals**, attracted to some members of more than one sex; and heterosexuals, attracted to some members of another sex. Though the origins of sexual orientation are not completely understood, it is generally believed to be established before the age of five.

## **Straight Ally**

Any person outside the LGBT community who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people.

## **Transgender**

Refers to those whose gender identity and/or expression do not match society’s expectations with regard to gender roles, or who do not identify as either of the sexes as currently defined. Transgender is a broad term that includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, drag queens/kings, transgender butch, and a variety of other identities; however, many people find the use of *transgender* as an umbrella term problematic because it reduces different identities into one oversimplified category. When referring to transgender people, use the pronoun they have designated as appropriate, or the one that is consistent with their presentation of themselves.

## **Transsexuals**

Individuals whose gender identities do not match the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Some transsexual people alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This procedure, called a **transition** (formerly “sex change”) is a complicated, multi-step process that may take years to complete.

# RESOURCES ON LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER HISTORY

## BOOKS FOR ADULTS

- *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America* by Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman
- *Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History for High School and College Students* by Kevin Jennings
- *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* by Allan Bérubé
- *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays and the Struggle for Equality* by Eric Brandt
- *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* by Jonathan Ned Katz
- *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Events, 1848-2006* by Lillian Faderman
- *Hidden From History* by Martin Duberman
- *Homophobia: A History* by Byrne Fone
- *Improper Bostonians: Lesbian and Gay History from the Puritans to Playland* compiled by The History Project
- *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature* by Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe
- *Making Gay History: The Half-Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights* by Eric Marcus
- *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights* by Eric Marcus
- *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, and Labor History* by Allan Bérubé
- *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth Century America* by Lillian Faderman
- *One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America* by Keith Boykin
- *Out in All Directions: A Treasury of Gay and Lesbian America* by Eric Marcus
- *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* by Neil Miller
- *A Queer History of the United States* by Michael Bronski
- *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* by Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai
- *Stonewall* by Martin Duberman
- *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done For America - A History* by Lillian Faderman

- Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman by Leslie Feinberg
- Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men by Lester B. Brown
- Who's Who In Gay And Lesbian History by Robert Aldrich
- Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History: From World War II to the Present Day by Robert Aldrich
- World Turned: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and Culture by John D'Emilio

### BOOKS FOR YOUTH

- Gay America: Struggle for Equality by Linas Alsenas
- Gay Power!: The Stonewall Riots and the Gay Rights Movement, 1969 by Betsy Kuhn
- Gay Rights Activists by Kate Burns
- Hear Us Out!: Lesbian and Gay Stories of Struggle, Progress, and Hope, 1950 to the Present by Nancy Garden
- Issues in Gay and Lesbian Life (A series for teens by Chelsea House Publishers, which includes the following titles: Lesbians and Gays and Sports by Perry Deane Young and Psychiatry, Psychology, and Homosexuality by Ellen Herman)
- Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians ( A series for teens by Chelsea House Publishers, which includes the following titles: James Baldwin, Willa Cather, Marlene Dietrich, Rock Hudson, John Maynard Keynes, T. E. Lawrence, Liberace, Federico Garcia Lorca Martina Navratilova, Sappho, Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde
- Statistical Timeline and Overview of Gay Life (Gallup's Guide to Modern Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Lifestyle) by Zachary Chastain

### DVDs

- After Stonewall by John Scagliotti, Janet Baus, Dan Hunt; First Run Features
- Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community by Greta Schiller; First Run Features
- The Brandon Teena Story by Gréta Olafsdóttir and Susan Muska; New Video Group
- Brother Outsider by Bennett Singer and Nancy D. Kates; Question Why Films
- The Celluloid Closet by Robert Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman; Sony Pictures
- Coming Out Under Fire by Arthur Dong; DeepFocus Productions
- Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt by Robert Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman; New Yorker Video
- Gay Pioneers by Glenn Holsten; Glennfilms / Equality Forum
- Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100 by Yvonne Welbon; Sisters in Cinema

- Milk by Gus Van Sant; Universal Studios
- Out of the Past by Jeff Dupre; Unapix Films
- Paragraph 175 by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, J.; New Yorker Video
- The Times of Harvey Milk by Rob Epstein and Richard Schmiechen; Black Sand Productions, Inc.

### Websites

- Black History Month Profiles: Highlighting Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender People: <http://www.nbjc.org/news/black-history-month-profiles.html>
- Gay History and Literature: <http://rictornorton.co.uk>
- Gay & Lesbian History in the US: A Snapshot of the 20th Century: [http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/cmehison/gay\\_les](http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/cmehison/gay_les)
- Gay and Lesbian Studies: A Research Guide (New York Public Library): <http://legacy.www.nypl.org/research/chss/grd/resguides/gay/gay.cfm>
- GLBT Historical Society: <http://www.glbthistory.org>
- GLBT History Month: <http://www.glbthistorymonth.com/glbthistorymonth/2010>
- GLBTQ Encyclopedia: <http://www.glbtc.com>
- The Lesbian Herstory Archives: <http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org>
- LGBT History on the Web: <http://home.earthlink.net/~ruthpett/lgbthistorynw/links.htm>
- ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives: <http://www.onearchives.org>
- OutHistory: [http://www.outhistory.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.outhistory.org/wiki/Main_Page)
- Out of the Past: <http://www.pbs.org/outofthepast>
- People With a History: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh>
- Reclaiming History: [http://www.uic.edu/depts/quic/history/reclaiming\\_history.html](http://www.uic.edu/depts/quic/history/reclaiming_history.html)
- Stonewall and Beyond: Lesbian and Gay Culture: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25>