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DREAMING OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, and FREEDOM

Curriculum



NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

- California public schools are required to include LGBTQIA+ curriculum in grades K-12. You can learn more [here about the relevant legislation](#). In short, this should be part of our school curriculums and culture.
- We recommend that you use a primer that helps demystify the topic, create a safe space, and establish a common vernacular when discussing gender and sexuality in class. You may borrow from this [Gender Spectrum Language Guide](#).
- It is a best practice to provide affirming and inclusive language for LGBTQIA+ students when writing inclusivity statements for your course syllabus. You may find this [guide](#) and [sample language](#) useful.
- It is important to update our practice to continue to match the needs of the time with up to date language and awareness. We recommend seeking out LGBTQIA+ Safe Zone-type training.
- While it is important to respect your own boundaries and sense what is relevant to your class and community, it is okay to share your own journeys including how you have navigated issues such as race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.

Key Term / Definition

Cisheteronormativity is defined as:

"a pervasive system of belief that centers and naturalizes heterosexuality and a binary system of assigned sex/gender when there are two rigid, distinct ways of being: assigned-male-at-birth masculine men and assigned-female-at-birth feminine women." ([source](#)).

Learning Objectives

These pieces have been selected as a way for students to:

- Think critically about social constructs like gender and sexual identity,
- Analyze challenging readings that offer a window for some and a mirror for others,
- Make connections between intersectional forms of oppression, including capitalism, race, gender, & sexuality.
- Build classroom communities that affirm and uplift LGBTQIA+ students.

Essential and Guiding Questions

- Throughout time, how have LGBTQIA+ people and communities resisted homophobia and transphobia?
- What are the intersections between race, culture, gender and/or sexuality?
- How can we free ourselves of internalized homophobia, sexism, and heteropatriarchy?

- How can we better affirm and support LGBTQIA+ members of our communities?

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Suggested Activities

1. Essential, grade-level lessons and activities for short film, *Bibi*, are provided in [great detail at Learning for Justice](#). *Bibi* tells the story of a Latinx father and son who can talk about anything—but only in writing, in the letters they pass back and forth when conversation seems too much. And after Ben, affectionately called “Bibi” by his father, hands his father a letter that reads “I’m gay,” the two don’t talk at all. Based on the experiences of the filmmakers behind the project, the 18-minute film explores duality in a powerful way, illustrating the beauty and conflict that can arise as we move between languages, places and societal expectations. [MS, HS, CC]

2. Biography assignment focused on notable LGBTQ individuals:

- To inspire & prep students, begin with a gallery walk or slideshow, of notable LGBTQ+ individuals and art, poems, and photography by LGBTQIA+ artists with significant focus on LGBTQIA+ Black, Indigenous, Latinx, API, SWANA, and other people of color. (See suggested sources below)
- Take it a step further and invite local LGBTQIA+ leaders and professionals in your community to share their educational journeys with your students.
- Have students choose a notable LGBTQIA+ individual to research, write about, and follow up by presenting their findings with a poster presentation, slide deck, poem, song, or other format.

Consider the following prompt: Select a notable LGBTQIA+ individual to research. Discuss the community/ies they belong to. Describe your individual's experience in that community. What characteristics, skills, or qualities does this individual have? Where do they find inspiration and joy? Consider: Who are the leaders in their community and what makes them leaders? What are some of the issues in their community and how do they address these issues? [MS, HS, CC]

3. Offer a lesson on Gender Identity:

- Share some key terms with students from Gender Spectrum's [Language of Gender](#) and watch this 5 minute playlist, [“5 Young People Share Out”](#).
- Invite students to write about the videos in response to these questions: For Daria, Grace, Khalid, Isa, & Raven: What does gender expression mean or signify? How important is it to them? What are their feelings about gender expression? Then, share out and discuss their observations.
- Add on a personal connection piece by inviting students to write in response to these questions: What does your gender expression mean to you? When are you most conscious of your gender expression? How do you think you can be respectful of other people's gender identity? (Allow students to always choose how much to share from these kinds of writings. Some students may not feel safe to honestly share their thoughts. Challenge by choice and setting up small discussion groups as opposed to whole-class discussion is important in these conversations. Allowing students to submit comments/share outs via notes anonymously handed to the teacher or on a platform like Jamboard can also allow for conversation while protecting people's sense of safety.)
- If you'd like to extend this activity, consider a longer written reflection such as: What messages have you grown up with around gender and/or sexuality? How does your family and community define different genders and/or sexualities? What are the gendered expectations people in your community have about how people should dress, act, etc? What do you imagine gender freedom might look like for yourself or others in your community?
- Always emphasize that one way we show love and care in our community is by respecting and affirming people's identities, including names and pronouns. Emphasize the importance of believing people when they tell us who they are because a person's identity is self-determined, not to be imposed by teachers or anyone. [MS, HS, CC]

4. Essential, grade-level lessons and activities for the short documentary on [LGBTQIA+ rights activist Marsha P. Johnson](#) are provided at [PBS](#). In this lesson, students will learn about Black trans activist Marsha P. Johnson, a leader of the LGBTQ community in the 1950s to 1990s and an important figure during the Stonewall

Uprising in 1969. Utilizing video, discussion questions, teaching tips, and examination of important terms to know, your students will gain a thorough understanding of Johnson's goals as an activist and organizer—her lasting impact on the LGBTQ movement. Then students apply what they've learned from Johnson's story and develop a platform around an issue that matters to them in an effort to organize their local community. [MS, HS, CC]

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5. After completing this lesson on [How to Use Gender Pronouns](#) with students, ask students to write a short story or poem in which the main character uses they/them pronouns. After students turn in their creations, reflect as a class on how it felt to use pronouns they may not have been familiar with. Discuss how intentional and thoughtfulness go a long way to keep our communities safe and welcoming to people of all gender experiences. [MS, HS, CC]

6. As a class or in groups, have students take turns reading aloud paragraphs from ["Understanding Patriarchy"](#) by bell hooks. This is a good time to have students practice annotation and note-taking skills collectively or individually. At the end of each page, ask groups to summarize the main ideas expressed on that page. After reading the article, discuss it as a class. What stood out to your students? Could they relate to any of the information? Did they agree or disagree with hooks' arguments?

- After completing class discussion, ask students to come up with a list of ways that patriarchy shows up in their lives. You may want to ask them to focus on experiences they've had in their families and communities or even at school. Examples can include the harsh ways people speak about women, homophobic and transphobic attitudes or cultural terms, and/or unrealistic beauty standards.
- Then, ask students to pair up and brainstorm 10 ways they can resist patriarchal beliefs and behaviors in their daily lives. When the pairs have completed their lists, discuss them as a class. Consider creating a large physical list of Ways to Resist Patriarchy as a class and hang it somewhere in the classroom where it is visible to students daily. [MS, HS, CC]

Text Selections

POETRY

- Abraham, George. (2020). ["To All the Ghosts I've Loved Before"](#) (Text) [HS, CC]
- Acevedo, Elizabeth. (2018). [Stoop-Sitting & other selections](#) (Text) [MS, HS, CC]
- Chin, Stacey Ann. (2019). [For You ; In Those Years](#) (Text) [HS, CC]
- Clifton, Lucille. (1991). [Won't You Celebrate with Me](#) (Text) [MS, HS, CC]
- Cuda, Mila, and Sarah Nwafor. (2019). ["Ode to Femme"](#) (Video) [HS, CC]
- Davis, Imani. (2018). ["The Recital"](#) (Text) [MS, HS, CC]
- Frohman, Denice. (2013) ["Dear Straight People"](#) (Video) [HS, CC]
- Golden. (2020). ["To the Transphobic Cis White Gay Men at Pride"](#) (Video) [CC]
- Igusti, Dena. (2020). [Cut Woman](#) (Poetry Book) [CC]
- Johnson, Janae. (2016). ["Black Butch Woman"](#) (Video) [HS, CC]
- Marie, Aurielle. (2021). [Gumbo Ya Ya](#) (Poetry Book) [CC]
- Nwafor, Sarah. (2022). [Already Knew You Were Coming](#) (Poetry Book) [CC]
- Pelaez Lopez, Alan. (2023). ["i want to live without the fear of deportation"](#) (Text) [CC]
- Proulx-Turner, Sharron. (2008) [She Walks for Days Inside a Thousand Eyes: \(A Two-Spirit Story\)](#) (Poetry/Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Sax, Sam. (2014). ["How to Build a Closet"](#) (Video) [CC]
- Soto, Christopher. (2014). [Nepantla: An Anthology Dedicated to Queer Poets of Color](#) (Poetry Collection) [CC]
- Smith, Danez. (2015). [Tonight in Oakland](#). [HS, CC]
- Valles, Jesus. (2019). ["I'd Like to Keep it On, Please"](#) (Text) [HS, CC]
- Warrior, Arati. (2016). ["Witch Hunt"](#) (Video) [MS, HS, CC]

NONFICTION

- Angelou, Maya. (2009) I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Memoir) [MS, HS, CC]
- Brammer, John Paul. (2021). Hola Papi: How to Come Out in a Walmart Parking Lot and Other Life Lessons (Memoir) [CC]
- Brown, Elaine. (1993). A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story (Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Chambers, Veronica. (2020) Finish the Fight!: The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote (Biographies) [MS, HS, CC]
- Dear Asian Youth Justice for Gender (Zine) [MS, HS, CC]
- Espinoza, Alex. (2001). "Easy Like Sunday Morning" (Essay) [HS, CC]
- Feinberg, Leslie. (1997). Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Marsha P. Johnson and Beyond (Essays) [HS, CC]
- Gay, Roxane. (2014). Bad Feminist (Memoir) [CC]
- Gilley, Brian Joseph. (2006) Becoming Two-Spirit: Gay Identity and Social Acceptance in Indian Country (Essays) [CC]
- Gurba, Myriam. (2017) Mean (Memoir) [CC]
- Hart, Benji and Michael Roberson. (2021). The Ballroom Scene Has Long Offered Radical Freedoms For Black and Brown Queer People. Today, That Matters More Than Ever (Article) [MS, HS, CC]
- Hong Kingston, Maxine. (1976). No Name Woman (Essay) [HS, CC]
- hooks, bell. (2017). Understanding Patriarchy (Essay) [HS, CC]
- Kobaba, Maia. (2019). Gender Queer (Graphic Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Lopez, Alan Pelaez. (2018). The X in Latinx is a Wound, Not a Trend (Article) [HS, CC]
- Lorde, Audre. (2020). Sister Outsider (Essays) [HS, CC]
- Luna, Caleb. (2018). The Gender Nonconformity of My Fatness (Article) [HS, CC]
- Luna, Caleb and Mary Senyonga. (2021). "If I'm shinin', everybody gonna shine": centering Black fat women and femmes within body and fat positivity (Article) [CC]
- Madden, T Kira. (2020). Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls: A Memoir (Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Malatino, Hil. (2020). Trans Care (Essays) [CC]
- McKenzie, Mia. (2014). Black Girl Dangerous on Race, Queerness, Class and Gender (Essays) [HS, CC]
- Mock, Janet. (2014). Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, & So Much More (Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Nguyen, Trung Le. (2020) The Magic Fish (Graphic Memoir) [MS, HS, CC]
- Porter, Billy. (2021). Unprotected: A Memoir (Memoir) [HS, CC]
- Simone Jones, Briona. (2021). Mouths of Rain: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Thought (Anthology) [CC]
- Specter, Michael. (2021). How ACT UP Changed America (Article) [MS, HS, CC]
- Stanley, Eric A. and Nat Smith. (2015). Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex, Second Edition (Essays) [HS, CC]
- Rothman, Jonathan. (2018). Liniker is claiming space for queer Brazilian musicians (Article) [HS, CC]
- Tinsley Omise'eke Natasha. (2008). BLACK ATLANTIC, QUEER ATLANTIC: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage (Article) [CC]
- Tourmaline. (2020). Filmmaker and Activist Tourmaline on How to Freedom Dream (Article) [HS, CC]
- Vaid-Menon, Alok. (2020). Beyond the Gender Binary (Short Essays) [MS, HS, CC]

FICTION

- Baldwin, James. (2013). Giovanni's Room (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Bridgforth, Sharon. (2004). Love Conjure/Blues (Performance Novel) [HS, CC]
- Callender, Kacen. (2019) Hurricane Child (Novel) [MS]
- Callender, Kacen. (2021). Felix Ever After (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Chan, Jessamine. (2022). The School for Good Mothers (Novel) [CC]
- Emezi, Akwaeke. (2019) Pet [MS, HS, CC]
- Emezi, Akwaeke. (2021) The Death of Vivek Oji (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Fajardo-Anstine, Kali. (2019) Sabrina and Corina (Short Stories) [HS, CC]
- Ford, J R and Vanessa Ford. (2021). Calvin (Picture Book) [MS, HS, CC]
- Forna, Namina. (2021). The Gilded Ones (Novel) [MS, HS, CC]
- Franklin, Tee. (2018). Bingo Love (Comics) [MS, HS, CC]
- Hernández, Daisy and Rehman, Bushra. (2019) Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism (Essays) [MS, HS, CC]

- Hurston, Zora Neale. (2006) Their Eyes Were Watching God (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Jaigirdar, Adiba. (2020) The Henna Wars (Novel) [MS, HS, CC]
- Little Badger, Darcie. (2019) Elatsoe (Novel) [MS, HS]
- Love, Jessica. (2018) Julian is a Mermaid (Picture Book) [MS, HS, CC]
- Oshiro, Mark. (2021) The Insiders (Fiction) [MS]
- Quintero, Isabel. (2015) Gabi, a Girl in Pieces (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Reyes, Sonora. (2022). The Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Rivera, Gabby. (2016) Juliet Takes a Breath. (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Saenz, Benjamin Alire. (2014). Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe (Novel) [MS, HS, CC]
- Sanchez, Erika. (2017) I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter. [HS, CC]
- Tea, Michelle. (2020). Tabitha and Magoo Dress Up Too (Picture Book) [MS, HS, CC]
- Thom, Kai Cheng. (2016). Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir (Novel) [HS, CC]
- Tomas, Aiden. (2020) Cemetery Boys [HS, CC]
- Walker, Alice. (2019). The Color Purple [HS, CC]

Whitehead, Joshua. (2020). Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction (Anthology) [HS, CC]

VIDEO + AUDIO

- Bratt, Peter. (2009) La Mision (Film) [HS, CC]
- BreakThrough News. (2020). The Dark History of Forced Sterilization (Video) [MS, HS, CC]
- CNN. (2018) Feminist on CellBlock Y (Documentary Film) [HS, CC]
- Duenas Victor. (2021) Bibi (Short Film) [MS, HS]
- Gender Reveal. (2021). Episode 108: Da'Shaun Harrison (Podcast Episode) [HS, CC]
- Guerrero, Aurora. (2015). Mosquita y Mari (Film) [MS, HS, CC]
- Jenkins, Barry [filmmaker]. (2016). Moonlight (Film) [HS, CC]
- Leonard, Zoey -Read by Mykki Blanco. (1992) I Want a Dyke for President (Poetry Recitation) [HS, CC]
- Livingston, Jennie [filmmaker]. (1990). Paris is Burning (Documentary Film) [CC]
- Ophelian, Annalise [filmmaker]. (2015). MAJOR! (Documentary Film) [HS, CC]
- Palestine Writes. (2021). Writing Palestinian Queerness: Literature, Poetry, & Film (Panel Discussion) [CC]
- PBS. (2016) Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton Cafeteria. (Documentary Film) [HS,CC]
- Rees, Dee [filmmaker]. (2011). Pariah (Film) [CC]

- Gender Spectrum offers resources and professional development for schools, communities, and families. Consider bringing them to your school/district.
- Learning for Justice provides resources "to supplement the curriculum, to inform [educator] practices, and to create inclusive school communities where children and youth are respected, valued and welcome participants."
- ONE Archives from USC Libraries includes many free curriculum and text resources.
- PBS Understanding LGBTQ + Identity Toolkit for Educators includes great English curriculum resources, including full units on Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, and Lorraine Hansberry.
- If you are unsure about your right to teach LGBTQ content in a CA public school, it may help to review the FAIR Act (2011), which requires the inclusion of LGBTQ + Disability people and issues in CA public school curriculum.
- FAIR Education Act Resources: Further information on the FAIR Act (2011) and Compilation of Middle School Curricula

- Facing History and Ourselves PPT on Identity and Choices and how construction of the self occur in the US: [My Part of the Story: Identity and Choices](#)

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NEXT CHAPTER: Linguistic Justice Through Language, Identity, and Culture

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