

Gr 5/6/7 Lesson Plan: The Struggle for LGBTQ Rights in Canada and the World

Overview

This lesson will explore the history of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer* or Questioning) rights in Canada and make comparisons to other countries around the world. It will highlight that different governments vary in their level of protection for human rights and freedoms, and that these protections often build, but sometimes are taken away over time.

Curriculum Connections

Socials 5 - Human rights and responses to discrimination in Canadian society

Socials 6 - Global poverty and inequality issues, including class structure and gender

Socials 7 - Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events, and compare the values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places

* Usage of the word “Queer” - Since the early 20th century, queer has had the meaning “gay or lesbian,” and for much of the time has been used with disparaging intent and perceived as insulting. Since the 1980s, queer has increasingly been adopted especially among younger members of the gay and lesbian community as a positive term of self-reference. However, the term is not universally accepted within the LGBT community, and might still be viewed by some as degrading. Queer is also a term used by activists and academics: *queer politics*; *scholars of queer literature*. And the term has more recently come to include any person whose sexuality or gender identity falls outside the heterosexual mainstream or the gender binary. A person identifying as queer can be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender-fluid, etc., but the use of queer avoids any specific label. It often replaces the acronym LGBTQ, which is limited because it relies on letters to include each identity.

Teaching Strategies and Questions

Start by looking at your school’s Code of Conduct.

- Why do we have this? It is meant to reflect the BC Human Rights Code. What is included when we talk about human rights?
- Which groups are named in the BC Human Rights Code? Why these groups? (historically targeted, often face discrimination)
- Who was Martin Luther King Jr and what did he do?
- Who was Viola Desmond and what did she do? (In 2018 on Canada’s \$10 bill)
- Does anyone know any other people who have fought for civil rights or human rights?
- What about gay and lesbian people? Have you heard the acronym LGBT or LGBTQ? It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and the Q can mean Queer or Questioning. These are OK words to use as long as they’re used respectfully and not hurtfully.
- Do you think that LGBTQ people have ever been treated unfairly? How? (employment, housing, marriage, benefits)
- Do you know anyone who has fought for LGBTQ equality and human rights?

Activities

- Read *The Harvey Milk Story* by Kari Krakow
- Read [The Story of Jim Egan](#) on opentextbc.ca
- Read an [article](#) or watch a [video news story](#) about Tru Wilson
- Design a postage stamp to honor someone who has fought for human rights. Write a persuasive paragraph to support your stamp.
- Divide students into groups and have half the class create a timeline for LGBTQ rights in Canada, and the other half, LGBTQ rights in the United States.
- Explore this [Map of Sexual Orientation Laws from ILGA](#) to see where rights are stronger or weaker.
 - Do they notice any connections with the rights of all people in a country?
 - What causes these differences between countries?
 - Are there factors that determine how progressive a country may be with respect to human rights?

- Can changes in one place affect another?
- How do they think a map showing rights for Transgender people would look? Why?
- Is gender identity and expression protected in Canada? How about our province?
- Do human rights in a country always move forward? What factors may cause human rights to be reversed?
- Can students find examples of recent changes in human rights for LGBTQ people in Canada or other countries?

Assessment

- Can students identify the grounds named in the BC Human Rights Code?
- Can students identify the ways that the BC Human Rights Code protects people from discrimination?
- Can students identify similarities and differences between the progress of LGBTQ rights in Canada versus other parts of the world?