

# 1969 DECRIMINALIZATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN CANADA

Grade: 5 to 8

(20-30 minute session)

## Learning Outcomes & Lesson Focus

### Students will:

- Identify The Wolfenden Report as a key historical event that led up to decriminalization of homosexuality in the UK, and its significance on the decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada in 1969
- Identify The Fruit Machine and The Lavender Scare as events that led up to The Wolfenden Report
- Identify Bill C-150 which led to the decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada in 1969, and the fact that this Bill did not result in any meaningful change for the GSRD community

### Lesson Focus

As a result of the learning activities within this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe what The Wolfenden Report is and its significance
- Describe what The Fruit Machine was (and watch movie or scene from it)
- Describe what The Lavender Scare was (and watch movie or scene from it)
- Recognize the issues at play within The Fruit Machine and The Lavender Scare
- Understand what Bill C-150 represented and what it meant for members of the GSRD community at the time— no meaningful change resulted for this community
- Understand which factors/events contributed to Bill C-150 (for example, The Wolfenden Report)

## Resources

### Lesson Materials/Supplies

- Internet access for students to research history and events
- **Audiovisual**
- The Fruit Machine movie OR The Fruit Machine documentary
- <https://www.tv.org/video/documentaries/the-fruit-machine-feature-version>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dLEn0h4hJl>
- “The Lavender Scare” (2017) documentary film
- [http://www.gbtqarchive.com/ssh/wolfenden\\_report\\_S.pdf](http://www.gbtqarchive.com/ssh/wolfenden_report_S.pdf)
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1962139/pdf/brmedj03120-0059.pdf>
- **Print/Publications**
- Links to Manitoba Curriculum - Kindergarten to Grade 8 - Physical Education/Health Education - Human Sexuality:  
[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/phys\\_hlth/hs\\_k-8/](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/phys_hlth/hs_k-8/)
- Manitoba Teachers’ Society: @2LGBTQIA Lesson Plans -  
<https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2018/04/17/lgbtq-lesson-plans/>
- \*\*\* CPHS Pride organization resources, if available, can be the primary resource for any research being completed by the students



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## Notes to Teacher

The use of the term Pride, even outside the context of Gay Pride or the GSRD (LGBTQ2+) communities, is sensitive due to its connection with religious or other beliefs. It will likely be necessary to acknowledge that there are both positive and negative connotations to the term pride.

It might be necessary to provide lead-in knowledge to the students which introduces that discrimination and harm has taken place based on who people “love” or “are attracted to”.

Treat the topic of sexuality and gender roles with sensitivity, always showing consideration for others. Encourage students to respect differences and to celebrate the rights and feelings of others, keeping in mind that not all families/cultures value the same things. To neutralize the topic or make it less personal, choose stories or books about how social and cultural influences affect sexuality and gender roles. It is important to allow students to form their own opinions about what kinds of messages the media convey to youth.

## Acronyms

- LGBTQ2+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirit
- GSRD: Gender, Sexual, and Relationship Diversity
- There are many versions of acronyms for this community with letters being added, removed, or reordered based on who is being represented and how. There is no perfect or authorized version for use in education, rather, being aware of any local cultural sensitivities can assist in utilizing culturally competent language.

The discussion of the events behind The Fruit Machine and the Lavender Scare may be sensitive and raise negative emotions and feelings. It may be necessary to discuss these emotions and address the issues that The Fruit Machine and the Lavender Scare posed, not just legally but also emotionally/morally. It may also be necessary to preface the film/documentary by discussing some of the sensitive scenes that students will see. The “contributions” and “significance” of events leading up to The Wolfenden Report might not always appear positive but served as a catalyst for positive change. Sensitivity will be needed in navigating discussion on these topics.

## Suggestions for Instruction

- Begin by asking if any of the students have heard of the Wolfenden Report, The Fruit Machine, or the Lavender Scare
- Discuss with students what the Wolfenden Report is—report that concluded the criminalization of homosexuality was an impingement on civil liberty
- Introduce students to two significant events that led up to the Wolfenden Report—The Fruit Machine and the Lavender Scare
- The Fruit Machine was created as an ostensibly scientific way to detect homosexuals, so they could be fired from their government jobs or pre-screened before being offered employment in the first place
- The Lavender Scare was an attempt by American politicians and political officials to purge the federal government—in the military and in other kinds of federal employment—of homosexuals
- Ask students to describe how they feel about the information you just provided to them and write some of these reactions/emotions on the classroom board
- Show the students one or both films/documentaries
- Discuss the film(s)/documentary(ies) with the students, highlighting the important factors, as well as the significance of the film/documentary to Pride



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## Suggestions for Assessment

### Observation

Teacher Assessment: Checklist

Observe whether the student is able to identify what The Wolfenden Report is and why it is significant to Pride

- Yes
- No

Observe whether the student is able to identify what The Fruit Machine and The Lavender Scare were

- Yes
- No

### Paper and Pencil Task

Teacher Assessment: Inventory

Have students write a reflection on the films/documentaries watched and what they believe the issues presented are. Some topics/questions that should be addressed within the reflections are as follows:

- 1) How does learning about The Fruit Machine and the Lavender Scare make you feel?
- 2) What is your opinion towards people losing their jobs or not being offered employment in the first place, due to their sexual orientation?
- 3) Are you proud of the changes made since the 1969 decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada?

