

WHAT IS DRAG?

History of Drag in Canada

Grade: 5 to 8

(20-30 minute session)

Learning Outcomes & Lesson Focus

Students will:

- Identify the meaning of Drag
- Describe ways in which Drag can be expressed/shown
- Understand connections between Drag and queer history
- Identify the applicability of Drag to the Gender, Sexuality and Relationship Diversity (GSRD (LGBTQ2+)) communities

Lesson Focus

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

- Describe what Drag is and its significance
- Recognize and understand the history of Drag
- Understand the connection between Drag and Pride in relation to GSRD and queer history

Resources

Lesson Materials/Supplies

- Internet access for students to research history and events
- Dictionary for students to look up words/terms

Audiovisual

- What is Drag?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_FrmCis7d0
- InQueery: Trixie Mattel Breaks Down the History of "Drag"
<https://www.them.us/story/inqueery-drag>

Print/Publications

- Picture books (Julián is a Mermaid, Auntie Uncle: Drag Queen Hero, Be Amazing: A History of Pride, The Sublime Ms. Stacks, The Art of Drag, etc.)
- *** 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.

Suggestions for Instruction

- Begin by asking the students what they know about Drag
- Share a definition of Drag with the students (an art form; a gender-bending creative expression in which folks create a persona; a form of self-expression often used to celebrate the queer community, etc.)
- Drag Queens and Drag Kings (a drag queen creates a version of a “feminine” persona while a drag king creates a version of a “masculine” persona through outfits, makeup, wigs)
- Discuss some of Canada’s history in Drag (interwoven with complex laws and harsh discrimination as plenty of queer establishments celebrating drag were raided through the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s)
- Since women weren’t allowed to perform in theatres, men had to take over and assume women’s roles
- Drag was common in ancient Greece and also in the Shakespearean era
- The Harlem Renaissance, a cultural revival of African American arts and academics, played a major role in the development of drag, and other parts of queer culture
- The revolutionary movement offered a new language that challenged social norms and demonstrated the fluidity of identity, showing Harlem, and by extension the world, the evolving nature of gender, sex, expression, and sexuality
- Inform students of International Drag Day (July 16th), explaining that it is a day to celebrate and honour the art of drag and the drag culture
- Show students the suggested videos under “audiovisual” and discuss
- Pass around some of the picture book suggestions or feel free to read one to students, followed by a short discussion



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Suggestions for Assessment

Observation

Teacher Assessment: Checklist

Observe whether the students can identify the relationship/connection between Drag and Pride in relation to GSRD and queer history

- Yes
- No

Paper and Pencil Task

Teacher Assessment: Inventory

Have students select a picture book from the list provided or from their own choice, that relates to Drag, and write a reflection on what they have learned that they maybe did not know before, as well as why this book can be beneficial to other students or adults who are not familiar on the topic of Drag

