

WHAT IS DRAG / HISTORY OF DRAG

(20-30 minute session)

Grade: 9 to 12

Learning Outcomes & Lesson Focus

Students will:

- Identify the recent controversy surrounding Drag within politics
- Understand and recognize notable figures in Drag

Lesson Focus

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

- Recognize the issues and controversies at play within Drag and politics
- Identify and understand the influence of notable figures in Drag

Resources

Lesson Materials/Supplies

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

Audiovisual

- <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/the-history-of-drag-and-how-drag-queens-got-pulled-into-politics/>

Print/Publications

- *** 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

- Share some background with students about the notable figures in Drag:
- Martha P. Johnson - protested police raids on homosexual clubs in New York City during the Stonewall Riot of 1969, which led to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front
- Martha was a gender non-conforming activist and a prominent figure in the LGBTQ community, serving as a "drag mother" helping homeless and struggling LGBTQ youth
- Sylvia Rivera - found a home within New York City's Drag community, then found herself at the center of activism after playing a key role in the Stonewall riots
- Sylvia and Martha P. Johnson co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), and they became fixtures in the community helping homeless transgender youth
- RuPaul Charles - modern time Drag queen; founded RuPaul's Drag Race which is an internationally successful tv show, highlighting the lives of Drag queens
- Discuss with students the controversy in politics recently, surrounding Drag within Canada
- In recent months, the art form of Drag has been cast in a false light by right-wing activists and politicians who complain about the "sexualization" or "grooming" of children
- Some politicians have proposed banning children from Drag events and even criminally charging parents who take their kids to one
- This portrayal of Drag from politics can obscure the art form and its rich history
- Ontario's NDP has urged the government to create community safety zones that would protect drag artists and GSRD communities from harassment and intimidation at their performances
- In Quebec, the Conservative Party of Quebec leader launched a petition seeking to "protect children from drag queens"
- This petition launched calls for an end to public funding for drag queen activities involving children (like story time)
- Ask students to share their thoughts on this political controversy



WHAT IS DRAG?

History of Drag in Canada

Grade: 5 to 8

(20-30 minute session)

Suggestions for Assessment

Paper and Pencil Task

Teacher Assessment: Inventory

Have students write a reflection or short essay, detailing their thoughts on the political controversy taking place recently around Drag. This reflection should include thoughts on having Drag queens reading stories to children and what they believe the positive impacts or insights this can have on younger children

