

LGBTQ+ History Lesson Plan

Inquiry Question:

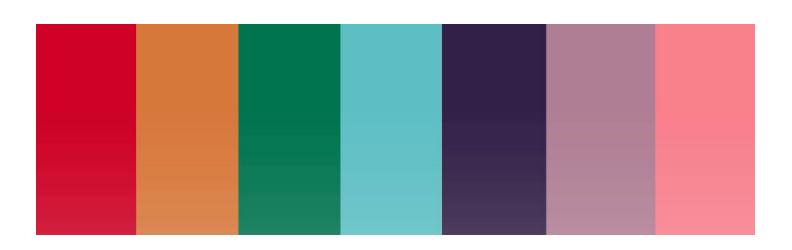
Were LGBT Americans welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s?

Standards:

11.5







Were LGBT Americans welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s?

Author

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Content Standards

11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s.

11.5.3. Examine the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the Volstead Act (Prohibition).

11.5.6. Trace the growth and effects of radio and movies and their role in the worldwide diffusion of popular culture.

CCSS Standards:

Reading History, Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Speaking and Listening, Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Overview of Lesson

This lesson is ideally used to supplement student learning of the 1920s era, and can provide opportunities to discuss social changes that accompany the Great Depression and the shift from the Roaring Twenties to the Great. It asks students to explore this era in Los Angeles, specific the entertainment industry and the nightlife developing in Hollywood during and after Prohibition. First in New York City and Harlem, then in Los Angeles, drag shows that drew crowds of black, white, gay and straight audiences gained popularity in these underground bars and venues. In addition, the changing nightlife of the 1920s was accompanied by shifts in literature, art, music, and film that challenged gender norms, embraced sexual ambiguity, and even featured LGBT characters or actors/performers in drag. The popularity of drag shows and blossoming of LGBT night life during this era, however, can be contrasted with the discriminated still faced by LGBT Americans. This included actors and actresses needing to keep their sexuality hidden, clubs being targeted and raided by the police, and by the 1930s, the industry regulating and censoring its content.

In this lesson, students are challenged to consider whether or not LGBT Americans were welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s. They will first examine several primary and secondary sources to better understand this trend as well as the experiences of some LGBT individuals in Los Angeles (specifically Hollywood) during this time. Then, students will consider and gather evidence from these sources to engage in a Structured Academic Controversy.

Sources

- A. Photo of actress Marlene Dietrich
- B. Page from guidebook How to Sin in Hollywood
- C. Photo of Gene Malin in "Arizona to Broadway," advertisement for performance by Gene Malin
- D. Photo of Gene Malin and Thelma Todd at Club New Yorker
- E. Excerpts from Variety magazine, October 4th, 1932
- F. Photo of Randolph Scott and Cary Grant
- G. Hollywood Production Code
- H. Excerpt from Gay L.A.

Resources

Google Slide Presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1g0l4Znlqb1gsZM1ejjRQh6r69O6FakNc7a4-wr9lR5w/edit?usp=sharing

Procedures (1-2 class periods)

- 1. **Warm Up:** Listening to Masculine Women, Feminine Men! and conducting an Ink-Pair-Share to respond to warm up questions to get students thinking about changes in gender and sexual norms during the 1920s.
 - Distribute **Handout 1** with the lyrics to *Masculine Women, Feminine Men!* and warm up questions to students. Give students some time to glance over the lyrics, and when ready, use **Google Slide Presentation** to play the audio, prompting students to read along with the audio.
 - Ink-Pair-Share: Read Warm Up question #1 together as a class, prompt students to consider their own response (think time), then have them write their own response on the back of **Handout 1**. Then, have each of them read their response to their shoulder partner. Each should write down the response shared by their partner. Repeat for Warm up question #2. (This protocol works best when you ensure that students are verbally sharing and actively listening to write down each other's responses instead of just copying their responses from each other's papers)
- 2. Vocabulary & Historical Context: After warm up questions, use the Google Slide Presentation to introduce topic and essential vocabulary to students.
 - First, to understand the entertainment and nightlife for this era, ask students to consider what they already know about "drag" and what it means to dress in "drag." Consider conducting a quick Turn and Talk, then having students share out whole-class. Then, identify an accurate definition of drag (provided in the Google Slide Presentation) and have students jot down the definition on Handout 1.
 - Next, continue with presentation and review the ways in which prohibition transformed the nightlife and entertainment culture in Hollywood (narrative included in the presentation), sharing photos of drag balls and performers in the slide. Consider pausing, checking for understanding, and prompting students to make observations and predictions based on the images. Have student summarize what they have learned about the Hollywood during this time in Handout 1.
 - Before moving on to document analysis, introduce historical inquiry question.
- 3. Document Analysis: Students work with a partner to examine Sources A-F and use Handout 2 to complete their description and analysis of sources.
 - Before having students work in partners, model for students how to examine the sources as a whole-class with Source A. Read the source title and description. Then, have students look closely at the image and have students Turn and Talk with their partner, each taking turns describing the image. Check for understanding, share out responses, and consider writing an exemplar response on the board. Then, ask students to use the source to consider the inquiry question: What does this source reveal about the experience of LGBT individuals in Los Angeles during this time? Were Angelenos tolerant of the LGBT community? Before moving on, check for understanding, share out responses, and consider writing an exemplar response on the board.

Have students work in partners to continue examining Sources B-F, completing Handout 2 to describe, then analyze each source to consider the inquiry question. Circulate classroom and check for understanding, ensuring that students are pushing themselves and each other to think deeply about the sources and what they reveal about the experience of and attitudes towards the lgbt community during this time. Consider pausing halfway through work time to share exemplar responses whole-class.

Note: If students need further scaffolding with summarizing and analyzing documents, consider using a protocol such as "Say, Mean, Matter."

- **4. Prepare for Structured Academic Controversy:** Review the instructions/protocols for the Student Academic Controversy, assign positions, and give students time to gather evidence and prepare for the discussion.
 - Distribute Handouts 3 & 4 to review the instructions for the Student Academic Controversy and begin preparation. Review and discuss the protocols and goals of the SAC on Handout 3 whole-class. Make sure to explain that this is a brief, structured discussion that will occur in groups of 4. Be careful not frame this as a "debate," as the focus of a SAC is for students to gather evidence and use academic language to communicate, discuss, and actively listen.
 - Group students into sets of 4 and assign each set of partners either Position A or Position B. Then, review **Handout 4**, and give directions to students to work with their partners to gather at least 4 pieces of evidence to support their position. Then, give students work time to gather evidence and prepare a statement.
- **5. Structured Academic Controversy:** Follow protocols on **Handout 5** to complete the SAC. Consider having one set of students model one part of discussion to ensure all students understand how to conduct the SAC. After completing SAC, make sure all four students come together to write a **consensus statement** that answers the inquiry question and cites evidence from the sources to support their statement.

Assessment

Structured Academic Controversy

Bibliography

ONE Archives, Subject Files: Pansy Craze

Fadermand, Lillian and Stuart Timmons, Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, & Lipstick Lesbians. Los Angeles, 2009.

George Arents Collection, The New York Public Library. "Marlene Dietrich." The New York Public Library Digital Collections. Retrieved from: http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-f7c4-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

Hamel, Jenny. "The Pansy Craze: When gay nightlife in Los Angeles really kicked off." KCRW, 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.kcrw.com/culture/shows/curious-coast/the-pansy-craze-when-gay-nightlife-in-los-angeles-really-kicked-off

Jeff, Leonard J. and Jerold Simmons, eds., The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s. New York, 1990.

Limerick, Lou. "Inside Cary Grant's secret life with men." NY Post, 2016. Retrieved from: https://nypost.com/2016/08/08/inside-cary-grants-secret-life-with-men/

Lord, Jack and Lloyd Huff, How to Sin in Hollywood. Hollywood, 1940.

Source A: Photo of Marlene Dietrich, date unknown.

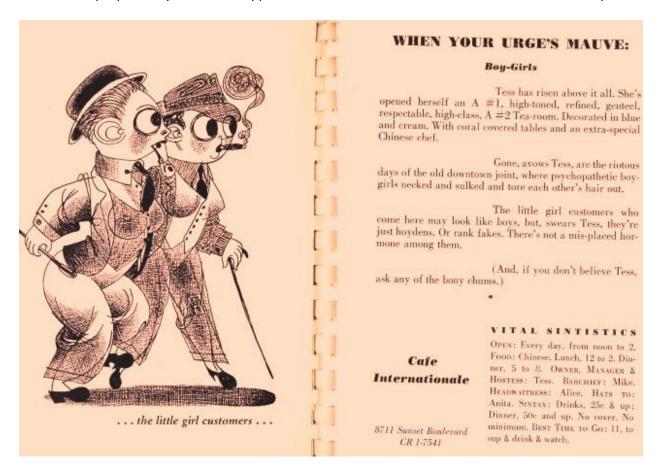
Marlene Deitrich was a German-American singer and actress, who acquired great fame and popularity during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. She, along with other actresses such as Greta Garbo and Audrey Hepurn, often wore masculine clothing, sometimes considered male drag in both her films and in public. While she kept her personal life hidden from the public during her career, she had many relationships with women. Although the public was not necessarily accepting to the sexuality of actresses such as Deitrich, their masculine style became a widespread fashion trend during the 1920s and early 1930s.



Source: The New York Public Library Digital Collections. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47de-c59d-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99/.

Source B: Page from How to Sin in Hollywood by Jack Lord & Llyod Huff, 1940.

A guidebook written that directed readers to various nightclubs in Los Angeles. On this page, "When Your Urge is Mauve" is coded language for a "lavender" or lesbian nightclub. The nightclub described is Tess's Cafe International, which commonly featured women performing in drag (male attire) and welcomed lesbian audiences. The date of this book notes the popularity of these types of clubs well into the late 1930s and early 1940s.



Source: How to Sin in Hollywood by Jack Lord and Lloyd Huff (Hollywood, 1940), p.39

Source C: Image of a scene from the 1933 film, "Arizona to Broadway" picturing actor Jean Malin. Advertisement for performance at Club New Yorker in Hollywood, date unknown.

During the 1920s and 1930s there were many nightclubs such as Club New Yorker in which female and male drag shows (men dressing and performing as women, or women dressing and performing as men) became popular. Gene Malin, who also went by "Jean Malin," was one of the first openly gay drag performers and actors during the prohibition era.



Jean Malin
BROADWAY'S GIFT TO HOLLYWOOD
Appearing Nightly [including Sunday]

Club New Yorker
Christie Hotel
Dining and Dancing from 7:30 until?
Phone for Reservations

GR 3723 HI 9605

Source: ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, Subject files "Pansy Craze"

Source D: Jean Malin and Thelma Todd (middle) with two others at Club New Yorker on Hollywood Blvd (1930s).



Source: ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, Subject files "Pansy Craze"

Source E: Excerpts from Variety magazine, October 4th, 1932

B.B.B.'S CELLAR

Hollywood, Oct. 1.

Most consistent money maker of the smaller night spots, BBB has been featuring a pansy revue in his cellar for the past seven months. Revue has changed only slightly during its run, and credit for the profit should be given to the m. c. himself, whose off-stage cracks about his floor show are 90% of the entertainment.

Spot sells nothing but laughs, with no attempt made to draw class patronage. However, it's a great drop-in spot for picture names, who come for a load of BBB. Tap is light, with the minimum check set at 50 cents.

Revue is headed by Loyce Trent, Milton, Paul and Linden, and Neil Dorneay. Trent is the 'prima donna.' Milton, Paul and Linden are dancers and singers, and Dorneay a dancer. Nothing out of the ordinary about their work, which has little chance to get anywhere in this spot, where noise is cultivated. Boys are backed by a line of 10 chorus men. There's no attempt to fool anyone on the revue's sex. Costumes are mostly made by the boys themselves. None wears wigs, probably due to being paid off in sandwiches.

Cellar was having a tough time a while back, but Al Rosen, picture agent, stepped in with some fresh money. Female impersonation stuff caught on, and it has been clear sailing since.

BBB's clowning is still the high spot. Revue has cut down his work considerable, making it all the better. Material used is slightly blue, but he's known for that. However, he's cut the raw stuff noticeably. Leonard Stevens, his accompanist for the past five years, is still at the piano. Marve Land's eight-piece band plays for the dancing. Combo is aces for this spot, batting out a hot brand of rhythm.

Everything thrown in BBB's about the best after-theatre spot for the money in town. Call.

COAST RAID ON PANZE JOINTS

Hollywood, Oct. 3. Backed up by federal agents, the Hollywood vice squad got busy over the weekend and raided BBB'S cellar for the second time, arresting nine men, and then visited Jimmy's Back Yard, arresting five. This is reported to be a drive on the Nance and Lesbian amusement places in town. Bobby Burns Berman and Ray Wright, his manager, were charged with violation of the prohibition act and released on \$1,500. bail. Seven patrons in the establishment were also taken on charge of being drunk and possessing liquor. .

Thomas B. Gannon, proprietor of the Back Yard, was charged with liquor possession and maintaining a nuisance. Four patrons there also were charged with liquor possession and released on bail later.

Source: Variety, October 4th, 1932, ONE Archives, Subject Pansy Craze

Source F: Randolph Scott and Cary Grant poolside at their Santa Monica beachfront house, 1935.

Cary Grant was a famous actor who starred in films during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s.



Source: Randolph Scott and Cary Grant poolside at their Santa Monica beachfront house, 1935 Courtesy Everett Collection

Source G: The Motion Picture Production Code, 1930 (Excerpt)

During the 1920s, the film industry produced many films that pushed the boundaries of what many Americans believed to be moral or appropriate. There were also several scandals and occurrences of violence involving film stars that damaged the reputation of the industry and motivated politicians to pressure the industry to censor their material. In 1930, the film studios hired William Hayes to create these codes as guidelines for films produced.

General Principles

- 1. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
- 2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
- 3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

•••

II—Sex

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

Source: "The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930," as quoted in Leonard J. Jeff and Jerold Simmons, eds., The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s (New York: Grove Wiedenfeld, 1990), 283–286.

Source H: Excerpt from Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians by Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons.

"Already by 1921...studios were beginning to include a "morality clause" in their contracts; in effect, these clauses said that "an actor who commits any act tending to offend or outrage public morals and decency will be given five days notice of the cancellation of his contract." Though the morality clause was instituted in response to heterosexual wrongdoing, homosexuals had reason to fear it. Once the movies became wildly lucrative business, studio bosses, who had a great deal to lose monetarily is a star's personal life "offended or outraged" the fans, became absolutely dictatorial about the public image of their stars, on screen as well as off. The studio bosses believed that in return for fat contracts, their stars were under obligation to appear—if not actually to be—"moral." If homosexuality was immoral in the mind of the general public, gay and lesbian actors needed to convince the public that they were straight, even to the extent of concocting pap for the media for their personal lives.

Fan magazines adored articles about who was dating or marrying or pining for whom, and actors were usually happy to cooperate, whether or not their romances were real. The straight storybook love affairs gay actors invented not only kept them from coming under fire, but also garnered great publicity, which was life's blood to Hollywood stars.

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Some of these actors married repeatedly. Cary Grant, his long-term affair with Randolph Scott notwithstanding, was married five times, generally with great unhappiness....The more successful a gay or unstraight actor became, the more intense grew studio (and self-imposed) pressures on him or her to hide true proclivities."

Source: Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians by Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons.

Handout 1: Warm Up

Lyrics to Masculine Women, Feminine Men by Frank Harris, 1926.

Hey! Hey! Women are going mad, today! Hey! Hey! Fellers are just as bad, I'll say!

Go anywhere, just stand and stare, You'll say they're bugs when you look at the clothes they wear.

Masculine Women, Feminine Men, which is the rooster which is the hen? It's hard to tell 'em apart today. And SAY...

Sister is busy learning to shave, Brother just loves his permanent wave, It's hard to tell 'em apart today. HEY! HEY!

Girls were girls and boys were boys when I was a tot.

Now we don't know who is who or even what's what.

Knickers and trousers, baggy and wide, Nobody knows who's walking inside.

Those Masculine Women, Feminine Men Masculine Women. Feminine Men which is the rooster which is the hen? It's hard to tell 'em apart today. And SAY...

Auntie is smoking, rolling her own, Uncle is always buying cologne. It's hard to tell 'em apart today. HEY! HEY!

You go and give your girl a kiss in the hall, But instead you find you're kissing her brother Paul.

Mama's got a sweater up to her chin, Papa's got a girtle holding him in.

Those Masculine Women, Feminine Men Stop, Look, Listen and you'll agree... with me.

Things are not what they used to be. you'll see.

You say hello to Uncle Joe, Then look again and you find it's your Auntie Flo.

Masculine Women, Feminine Men which is the rooster which is the hen? It's hard to tell 'em apart today.

And SAY...

Wifey is playing billiards and pool, Hubby is dressing kiddies for school. It's hard to tell 'em apart today. HEY! HEY!

Ever since the Prince of Wales in dresses was seen.

What does he intend to be the King or the Queen?

Grandmother buys those tailor-made clothes,

Grandfather tries to smell like a rose.

Those Masculine Women, Feminine Men

Source: https://www.queermusicheritage.com/MWFM.html

Ink-Pair-Share Questions According to Harris's lyrics, what is changing in American society during this time? My response: My partner's response: Based on this song, do you think Los Angeles may have been a city that was tolerant of lgbt individuals during this time? My response: My partner's response:

Key Vocabulary

Drag:	
Pansy Craze:	

Handout 2: Source Analysis

Source	Summarize Describe the source in your own words.	Analyze What does this source reveal about the experience of lgbt individuals in Los Angeles during this time? Were Angelenos tolerant of the lgbt community?
A		
В		
С		
D		
E		
F		
G		
Н		

Handout 3: Student Directions for Academic Controversy

During today's class, you will work in teams to discuss arguments supporting or contradicting the inquiry question. You will be assigned either "Position A" or "Position B" and need to defend your position with evidence from the documents you have reviewed. Your goals for today should include looking at all the evidence, seeing both sides, and finding common ground.

Inquiry Question: Were lgbt Americans welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s?

Position A: Yes, Igbt Americans were welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s.

Position B: No, lgbt Americans were not welcome in hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s.

Part I. Partners Prepare

a. Review your document analysis and find evidence to support your side of the argument. Write this in the chart that you have been provided with. Prepare a statement to read that states your position and the evidence you gathered.

Part II. Position Presentation

- a. Side A presents their position using supporting evidence from the texts. b. Side B restates to Side A's satisfaction.
- c. Side B presents their position using supporting evidence from the texts. d. Side A restates to Side B's satisfaction.

Part III. Consensus-Building

- a. Forget your roles. Work it out.
- b. Look at the issue. What can you agree on?
- c. Write a claim that answers the inquiry question as a group.

Handout 4: Collecting Evidence

Position A: Yes, Igbt Americans were welcome in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s.	Position B: No, Igbt Americans were not welcome in hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s.		
Evidence for Position A	Evidence for Position B		
Source supports our position because	Source supports our position because		
Source supports our position because	Source supports our position because		
Source supports our position because	Source supports our position because		
Source supports our position because	Source supports our position because		
Your statement: Script out your statement, citing evidence, below.			

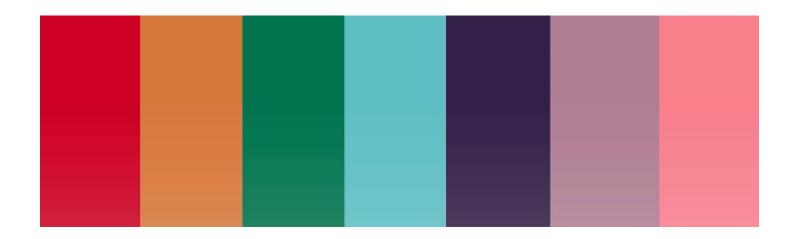
Handout 5: Structured Academic Controversy

Protocol:

- 1. Team A presents their position using supporting evidence from the documents
- 2. Team B restates Team A's position
- 3. Team B presents their position using supporting evidence from the documents
- 4. Team A restates Team B's position
- 5. Both work towards and come to a consensus.

Final Consensus

eached a consensus. We believe	





The ONE Archives Foundation, Inc. is the oldest continuously operating LGBTQ organization in the nation, and a critical resource for showcasing trailblazing and diverse LGBTQ+ history and culture. The ONE Archives foundation provides programs and resources for students, educators, and the public, supporting inclusive learning environments and providing gateways to learn about the LGBTQ communities' contributions to society, in conjunction with the FAIR Education Act.

For more information, contact Erik Adamian, Associate Director of Education at eadamian@onearchives.org



The UCLA History-Geography Project is one of the sites of the California History Social Science Project. The UCLA History-Geography Project collaborates with educational researchers, historians and practitioners to design and lead professional development programs that enrich K-12 history-social studies instruction.

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