

The Story of Bayard Rustin (Protests and Social Change)



Level: Third/Fourth

This lesson plan will support you to deliver lesson/s about the life and times of Bayard Rustin, supporting pupils to think critically about inequality, protest action and rights movements, and social change within a historical and contemporary framework.

This lesson plan accompanies The Story Of Bayard Rustin Third/Fourth Level powerpoint slides.

Additional lesson activity ideas and/or opportunities for assessment are provided at the end of this plan, including ideas for home or project work for pupils.

Curriculum for Excellence Links

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
<p><i>As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.</i></p> <p>HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09a</p>	
<p>I can describe the factors contributing to a major social, political or economic change in the past and can assess the impact on people's lives. SOC 3-05a</p> <p>I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. SOC 3-06a</p> <p>Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time. SOC 3-06b</p>	<p><i>Compares a range of primary and secondary sources of evidence, to present at least three valid conclusions about a historical period.</i></p> <p><i>Provides an account with at least two simple explanations as to how and why society has developed in different ways comparing Scotland to another society in Europe or elsewhere.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies at least three factors which contributed to major social, economic or political change in the past.</i></p> <p><i>Provides at least two valid opinions about the impact on people's lives of a major social economic or social change in the past.</i></p> <p><i>Provides at least two valid opinions about the possible motives of those involved in a significant turning point or event in history.</i></p> <p><i>Provides a valid opinion of the impact of this significant historical event.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies at least two possible causes of past conflict, using research methods.</i></p> <p><i>Presents in any appropriate form at least two impacts on people at that time.</i></p>

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
<p>By studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it.</p> <p>SOC 4-04a</p>	<p><i>Draws at least three reasoned conclusions about the reasons for inequality.</i></p> <p><i>Provides at least two arguments, including both for and against, as to how a group or individuals have addressed inequality.</i></p>
<p>Having critically analysed a significant historical event, I can assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the event.</p> <p>SOC 4-06a</p>	<p><i>Uses critical analysis to evaluate the relative importance of the factors which led to an historical event.</i></p>

LGBT Inclusive Education Learning Themes
Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying
Celebrating diversity and difference
History of LGBT equality movements
LGBT past and present figures and role models

Equality Act Characteristics Covered
Sexual Orientation
Gender Reassignment
Race
Marriage and Civil Partnership





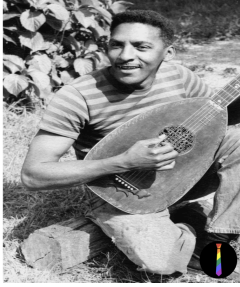

Learning Intentions
• Pupils will learn about example/s of racial inequality and discrimination
• Pupils will learn about example/s of inequality and discrimination experienced by LGBT people
• Pupils will learn about responses to inequality, including protest and rights movements

Success Criteria
• I can provide two detailed examples of how a community of people experiencing inequality responded to it
• I can share an informed opinion on the impact that one or more major social changes had on people's lives
• I can provide an example of a past figure who challenged inequality and explain why they did so
• I can discuss the importance of the factors which led to one or more significant historical events

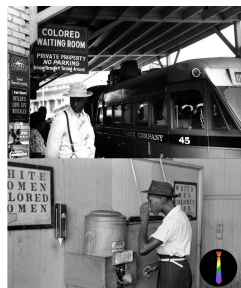
Resources accompanying this lesson

- The Story of Bayard Rustin (Protests and Social Change) Third/Fourth Level (Powerpoint Slides)
- Short Documentary - [Bayard and Me](#) (Vimeo)
- Making Gay History Podcast - [Episode 12 Bayard Rustin](#) (Podcast and Transcript)
- Bayard Rustin Biography Handout (PDF)

Lesson Plan

Powerpoint Slide	Teaching Notes
<p data-bbox="132 376 331 443">The Story of Bayard Rustin</p> <p data-bbox="180 501 284 528">Third/Fourth Level Protests and Social Change</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 271 1505 331">Introduce the lesson, explaining to pupils that they will be learning about the life of Civil Rights Leader Bayard Rustin, and responses to inequality.</p> <p data-bbox="635 365 1457 425">Begin the lesson by asking pupils whether they have heard of Bayard Rustin before. Can anyone tell you who he was?</p> <p data-bbox="635 459 1441 519">Then, ask pupils if they have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Can anyone tell you who he was?</p>
<p data-bbox="129 607 571 640">By the end of this lesson, I can:</p> <ul data-bbox="132 663 563 813" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide two detailed examples of how a community of people experiencing inequality responded to it. • Share an informed opinion on the impact that one or more major social changes had on people's lives. • Provide an example of a past figure who challenged inequality and explain why they did so. • Discuss the importance of the factors which led to one or more significant historical events. 	<p data-bbox="635 577 1134 611">Discuss the Success Criteria with learners.</p>
<ul data-bbox="132 925 352 1137" style="list-style-type: none"> • Bayard was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania on 17th March 1912. • Raised as a Quaker by his grandparents, which gave him strong values of dignity and equality for all humans. • He believed that ordinary people could change the world, and that inequality and injustice could be transformed.  	<p data-bbox="635 891 1350 925">Provide pupils with some background to Bayard Rustin's life.</p> <p data-bbox="635 958 1457 1081">Bayard was born in 1912, and he was raised as a Quaker by his grandparents, a Christian (Protestant) denomination committed to equality and peace for all humans. Bayard held these values strongly, and believed that ordinary people could change the world.</p>
<ul data-bbox="132 1227 347 1458" style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing up black in early 20th century America, Bayard experienced direct racism and discrimination from a young age. • His school football team organised an event at the YMCA, at a time when black youth were banned from swimming at the centre. His grandmother encouraged him not to attend in protest - this was his first experience of fighting for change.  	<p data-bbox="635 1205 1473 1361">Explain to pupils that Bayard grew up in early 20th century America during the segregation era, and experienced discrimination and racism throughout his early life. At the time, black citizens in America were treated as second class citizens across many States and had no civil rights or protections in the law.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1395 1509 1552">One of Bayard's early memories is when his school football team organised a get together at the YMCA, where black youth were banned from swimming. His grandmother encouraged him not to go in order to take a stand against the unfair treatment. This was his first experience of protesting against inequality.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1585 1505 1646">Ask pupils if they know what segregation means, and whether they know anything about the Jim Crow laws.</p>

- As a student in the 1930s, Bayard visited the Southern States of America. Some still enforced racial segregation (Jim Crow) laws: separating people in public spaces and facilities by the colour of their skin.
- This meant that black citizens were required to sit at the back of buses and give up their seats; had designated spaces in restaurants; and public facilities like toilets and water fountains were separated for "Whites Only" and "Colored Only".



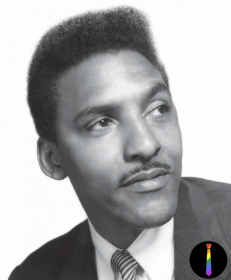
Explain to pupils that the segregation era in America was when Southern States enforced Jim Crow Laws.

Jim Crow Laws were a series of state and local laws which meant that citizens were separated and treated differently depending on the colour of their skin, with black citizens required to sit at the back of public buses or give up their seats to white people, and public facilities like waiting rooms, water fountains, and restaurants had designated spaces for "Whites Only" and "Colored Only". Public schools were also segregated, meaning that black pupils and white pupils were not allowed to learn together.

In many cases, businesses like shops and restaurants would refuse service to black people, and some would place signs on their doors saying "We serve Whites only" or "We cater to White trade only".

Ask pupils to consider how these laws would have shaped attitudes towards black people in the Southern United States at the time.

- While in the South, Bayard had a life changing experience. He resisted taking a seat at the back of a public bus and purposely got himself arrested as a result, in order to protest the segregation laws.
- It all happened because a child on the bus reached out to touch his necktie as he got on board, and he came to a realisation...



Bayard visited Southern States in the 1930s, where he had a life changing experience. He was preparing to take a seat at the back of a public bus, but decided to protest this by refusing to do so and he purposely got himself arrested.

In the next slide, Bayard explains what happened in his own words.

"As I was going by the second seat to go to the rear, a white child reached out for the red necktie I was wearing and pulled it. Whereupon its mother said, "Don't touch a n****r."

I said to myself, if I go and sit quietly in the back of that bus now, that child who was so innocent of race relations ... will have seen so many blacks go in the back and sit down quietly that it's going to end up saying, "They like it back there, I've never seen anybody protest against it."

So I said, I owe it to that child that it should be educated to know that blacks do not want to sit in the back, and therefore I should get arrested letting all these white people in the bus know that I do not accept that."

- Bayard Rustin speaking in 1986



Bayard spoke about this important moment in his life in 1986, which has been included in a podcast.

Ask pupils to consider why this experience might have been so important for Bayard.

The full podcast episode and transcript is available here, if you want pupils to consider primary sources: <https://makinggayhistory.com/podcast/revisiting-the-archive-episode-12-bayard-rustin/>

- The experience on that bus had an impact on Bayard - but not only because he had protested racial inequality, or had been arrested.
- Bayard realised that he was gay when he was in high school. This experience, years later, encouraged him to make others aware of his sexuality - at a time when gay relationships were a criminal offence - so that he could be true to himself.



Tell pupils that Bayard realised that he was gay when he was in high school. After this experience on the bus, Bayard recognised that he did not want to hide any part of who he was, and he made the decision to tell others about his sexuality.

He started by telling his grandmother, who he said was indifferent, but warned him about the dangers of being a gay black man in America at that time. This was when gay relationships were still a criminal offence in all but one State.

"Now, it occurred to me shortly after that, that it was an absolute necessity for me to declare homosexuality, because if I didn't I was a part of the prejudice. I was aiding and abetting."

- Bayard Rustin speaking in 1986



This quote from Bayard explains his thought process behind this decision.

He felt that if he hid that he was gay from others, or denied it, then he would be contributing to prejudice in society.

Discussion

- Why do you think that Bayard felt it was important not to hide or deny that he was gay after his experience of racism on the public bus in the 1930s?
- Why do you think that Bayard felt that he would be "aiding and abetting" discrimination and intolerance if he didn't make this decision?



Facilitate a discussion with pupils once they have read the quote from Bayard on the previous slide.

Why do pupils think that Bayard felt it was important not to hide or deny that he was gay after his experience of racism on the segregated bus?

Why do pupils think that Bayard felt he would be "aiding and abetting" discrimination and intolerance if he hid or denied his sexuality?

Do pupils think that this would have been an easy decision for Bayard to make in the 1930s?

Significant Historical Event

- Bayard was a pacifist - which meant he believed strongly in non-violence, including in protests. In 1946 he organised the first Freedom Ride through Southern states to protest segregation on public buses.
- He and 18 others travelled on buses and refused to sit at the back. Many of the protestors and supporters faced beatings and arrests - Bayard was convicted for taking part.



Explain to pupils that Bayard was a pacifist, which meant that he strongly believed in nonviolence. He did not believe that war could bring peace, and he did not believe that violence could bring justice.

Bayard had some experience with protesting against inequality in his youth, and he knew that he had to continue this. In 1946 he organised the First Freedom Ride through Southern States to protest against segregation on public buses.

Bayard and 18 other protestors travelled on public buses. The plan was to start in Washington D.C. and travel through Southern States while refusing to sit at the back of the buses or give up their seats.

Many of the protestors and supporters were beaten and experienced racist abuse. Bayard was arrested and convicted for taking part in the protest.

- By 1956, Bayard had met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and convinced him that the movement for black civil rights should use non-violent tactics.
- They first worked together during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, when Rosa Parks was arrested after she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger.



Bayard eventually became an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and convinced him that the movement for black civil rights should use nonviolent tactics.

This was an important meeting of minds, as MLK would later become known for his nonviolent approach to protesting and demanding civil rights for black citizens.

The photograph in this slide shows MLK and Bayard together.



This video clip shows footage of Bayard participating in a series of different nonviolent protests for the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite experiencing violence, discrimination, and abuse - why do pupils think that Bayard strongly believed in nonviolent protest?

Bayard said: "We call for a nonviolent uprising, with people sitting, standing, white and black together."

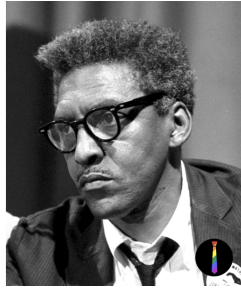
Do pupils think it was important for white people who supported the Civil Rights Movement to participate in the protests and show solidarity? Why or why not?

- Bayard became a close advisor to Dr. King and was a successful strategist for the civil rights movement throughout the 1950s.
- However, his refusal to hide or deny that he was gay made him the target of homophobic attacks, and other leaders in the civil rights movement wanted to make sure that he was kept behind the scenes.



Bayard was an accomplished political strategist, organiser, and public speaker, however as the movement grew in strength other leaders made sure he was kept in the background - due to the fact that Bayard refused to hide his sexuality.

- In 1953 Bayard was arrested on a "morals charge" and he spent 50 days in the Los Angeles County Jail.
- Like many other gay and bisexual men in America and Britain at the time, Bayard was criminalised for consensual relationships with other men. In America, homosexuality was illegal in all but one State, and Britain had it's own anti-homosexuality laws. In Scotland, they were in place until 1981.



In 1953 Bayard spent 50 days in a LA County jail having arrested and convicted on a "morals charge" - for having a consensual relationship with other men.

In America, homosexual acts were illegal at this time. These laws were not ruled as unconstitutional in all states until 2003.

In Scotland, homosexuality was criminalised until 1981.

What impact do pupils think these laws had on public opinion? What do they think about some people's love, and relationships, being illegal?

- In 1950s America, employers could legally fire people that they thought were gay. There were no specific rights or protections for any LGBT people. In the UK, LGBT people received full legal protection from discrimination in 2010 with The Equality Act.
- Potential punishments for those convicted of homosexuality could include life imprisonment or internment in asylums. Many LGBT people lived in fear of discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- Campaigners had already begun to protest against this discrimination by the early to mid 1950s.



In 1950s America, LGBT people had no legal protection and could be fired from their jobs, imprisoned, and even interned in asylums if they were convicted.

In the early to mid 1950s campaigners had begun to protest against the discrimination faced by LGBT people. These early protestors experienced violence and intimidation.

- After eight years of working together, Dr. King set up a committee to establish whether Bayard's involvement was dangerous for the movement. The committee concluded that it was, because he was gay.
- Bayard said: "At a given point, there was so much pressure on Dr. King about my being gay and particularly because I would not deny it."



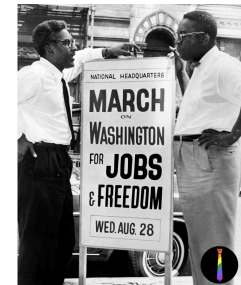
Following eight years of working with Dr King, in 1962 it was decided by a committee that Bayard was a 'danger' to the civil rights movement due to his sexuality. Dr King decided to distance himself and the leadership of the movement from Bayard.

Read Bayard's quote about this to pupils.

Why do pupils think that "there was so much pressure" on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. about Bayard being gay?

Significant Historical Event

- In 1963, Bayard became the Chief Strategist and organiser for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.
- The march was attended by an estimated 250,000 people and this is where Dr. King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech.
- One year later, the Civil Rights Act 1964 was introduced in America.

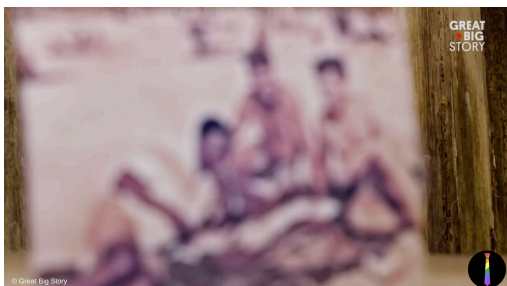


Explain to pupils that while planning one of the most important civil rights protests, Dr. King brought Bayard back into the movement in 1963. Bayard was the Chief Strategist and organiser of the march on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

The march attracted an estimated 250,000 people, and was a pivotal moment in history, and in American civil rights, and where Dr King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech.

At the march, Bayard gave a speech sharing the demands of the Civil Rights Movement - including an end to all segregation, equal opportunities, and rights to nondiscrimination for black people across all of America.

One year later, in 1964 the Civil Rights Act was introduced in America, which ended segregation in public spaces, including schools, and banned discrimination based on race.



Play this video clip for pupils, which discusses Bayard's contribution to the Civil Rights Movement.

Discussion

- The Civil Rights movement and the movement for LGBT equality led to major social changes in America and here in the UK. How much progress do you think has been made for tackling inequality experienced by different communities of people?



Facilitate a discussion with pupils about what they have learned so far, and the clip that they have watched. Bayard experienced discrimination on the basis of both his race and his sexual orientation.

The Civil Rights Movement, and the movement for LGBT equality which emerged shortly after, eventually led to major social changes in America and also in the UK.

Thinking about the modern day, how much progress do pupils think has been made for tackling inequality, racism, and homophobia? Is there more that has to be done and, if so, what?

- Bayard met his partner Walter Naegle in 1977. By then he had become involved with the growing movement for LGBT rights, which had been inspired by the Civil Rights movement before it.
- Walter said that Bayard "...saw this as another challenge, another barrier that had to be broken down - a larger struggle for human rights and for individual freedom."



Tell pupils that the photograph shows Bayard and his partner Walter, who he met in 1977.

By this time, Bayard had become more involved with the LGBT rights movement, which had grown in strength and had been inspired by the tactics of protest and the successes of the Civil Rights Movement.

The first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights took place in October 1979, with protestors demanding equal rights for lesbian and gay people, to protect lesbian and gay youth from discrimination and harassment, and to repeal all anti-homosexuality laws.

Bayard saw this as another important struggle for human rights, and had experienced and been impacted by homophobia throughout his life.

Explain to pupils that because same-sex marriage being illegal at the time, Bayard felt forced to adopt his partner Walter in 1982, so that their relationship could have some form of legal protection in the event of Bayard's death.

Without this step, Walter would have been afforded no rights over Bayard's estate - which was a common outcome for gay couples at this time, leaving grieving partners without any inheritance or legal protection.

Significant Historical Events

- After his death in 1987, Bayard was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2013. Walter collected this on his behalf.
- In 2020, Bayard was posthumously pardoned for his "morals charge" conviction in 1953. The California Governor who pardoned him said the law had been used to "...stigmatise and punish LGBTQ people."







Bayard died in 1987, and after his death President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013, which his partner Walter collected on his behalf.

And in 2020, LGBT rights campaigners petitioned the State of California to issue a pardon to Bayard for his 1953 anti-homosexuality conviction. The California Governor, Gavin Newsom, agreed to grant the pardon, and also opened a programme to allow other gay and bisexual men who had been unfairly convicted too.

Britain also had anti-homosexuality laws, and in 2019 Scotland introduced a process for gay and bisexual men who had convictions to apply for pardons here. For men who received these unjust convictions, it remained on their criminal records and continued to negatively impact their lives in different ways, such as applying for jobs.

However, some of the men affected felt that a pardon did not go far enough, as it still implied that they had committed some sort of crime. British campaigner George Montague said that he would not accept a pardon, and instead wanted an official apology for what he and thousands of others had been put through.

More information about pardons is available here on the BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-37713078>

<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGBT equality campaigners petitioned the State of California to grant Bayard Rustin a pardon for his homosexuality conviction. <p>In 2019, The Scottish Parliament introduced a process for men convicted under British anti-homosexuality laws to apply for pardons here too. Why do you think campaigners felt it was important for this to be done?</p> 	<p>Facilitate a discussion with pupils about what they have learned.</p> <p>Why do pupils think that LGBT rights campaigners felt that it was important for Bayard, and other men unfairly convicted, to receive a posthumous pardon? What message do they think that this sends?</p>
 <p><small>© PBS / White House</small></p>	<p>This video clip shows President Barack Obama speaking about Bayard's life. He says: "For decades, this great leader - often at Dr King's side - was denied his rightful place in history because he was openly gay."</p> <p>Do pupils think that it is important to learn about the life and experiences of someone like Bayard Rustin today? If so, why?</p>
 	<p>Finish lesson.</p> <p>Additional learning activities and opportunities for assessment are detailed below, including pupil research projects.</p>

Additional Learning Activities and Opportunities for Assessment:

• Further Research Activity

Play the short documentary [Bayard and Me](#) (16 minutes) for pupils. Task pupils with writing down any examples of discrimination or inequality that they can identify as they are watching the documentary.

During the film, Walter Naegle explains that because same-sex marriage was not legal at the time, Bayard felt forced to adopt Walter in 1982, in order that their relationship could have some form of legal protection if Bayard died. Without this step, Walter would have had no rights over Bayard's estate, or responsibility for any arrangements after he died - which was a common outcome for gay couples at this time, leaving grieving partners without any inheritance or legal protection.

Task pupils with researching in groups the current situation for marriage equality across the globe:

- When was same-sex marriage legalised in Scotland?
- How many countries still outlaw same-sex marriage?
- Why was equal marriage a central call for the modern LGBT rights movement in Europe and America?
- What other examples of inequality do LGBT people experience across the globe today, and what are campaigners doing to address and respond to it?

<p>Having used digital technologies to search, access and retrieve information I can justify my selection in terms of validity, reliability and have an awareness of plagiarism.</p> <p>TCH 3-02a</p>	<p>I can use digital technologies to process and manage information responsibly and can reference sources accordingly.</p> <p>TCH 4-02a</p>
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• **Creative Writing Activity**

Task pupils with writing a diary entry from the perspective of a participant on the day of the following significant historical event:

1. The National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (October 1979)

Pupils can refer to Primary and Secondary sources to find out more about the march. In their diary entries, pupils should explain what happened at the march, what the purpose of the march was, and what society was like for LGBT people at the time of the march.

Pupils should consider how it might have felt to be there on the day of the march, why the protestors would have participated in the march, and what their hopes and aspirations may have been.

["Why We Are Marching!" Pamphlet and agenda for the 1979 March](#) (PDF document)

[Recording of Audre Lorde speaking at the 1979 March](#) (YouTube video)

["We Are Everywhere" Participants in the March share their experiences](#) (YouTube video)

I can recreate a convincing impression of a personal experience for my reader, sharing my feelings and reactions to the changing circumstances with some attempt at reflection. ENG 3-30a	I can create a convincing impression of my personal experience and reflect on my response to the changing circumstances to engage my reader. ENG 4-30a
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• **Write A Newspaper Column Activity**

Task pupils with writing an opinion column for a fictional newspaper, examining the impact of one of the following significant historical events:

1. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (August 1963)

2. The National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (October 1979)

When researching and writing their opinion columns, pupils should refer to Primary and Secondary sources and consider:

- What were the demands of the protestors who participated in the march?
- What was the impact of the march? Did any change happen as a result?
- What impact could the march have had on attitudes in wider society?
- What was the lasting legacy of the march?
- Have the issues that protesters in the march were trying to address been successfully addressed, or is there still more to be done to achieve equality?

<p>Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select, sort, summarise, link and use information from different sources.</p> <p>LIT 3-14a / LIT 4-14a</p>	<p>I can use notes and other types of writing to generate and develop ideas, retain and recall information, explore problems, make decisions, generate and develop ideas or create original text. I recognise when it is appropriate to quote from sources and when I should put points into my own words. I can acknowledge my sources appropriately.</p> <p>LIT 3-25a</p>
<p>Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select, sort, summarise, link and use information from different sources.</p> <p>LIT 4-14a</p>	<p>I can use notes and other types of writing to generate and develop ideas, retain and recall information, explore problems, make decisions, or create original text. I can make appropriate and responsible use of sources and acknowledge these appropriately..</p> <p>LIT 4-25a</p>

- **Multimedia Research Project**

Task pupils with creating a Powerpoint (Social Studies); writing a persuasive essay (English and Literature); recording an audio podcast (Technologies); creating a piece of verbatim theatre (Expressive Arts: Drama) about the life and experiences of Bayard Rustin.

Further LGBT Inclusive Education teaching resources:

- lgbteducation.scot/resources