

The Story of Lady Gaga (Rights Movements and Celebrity)



Level: Third/Fourth

This lesson plan will support you to deliver lesson/s about Lady Gaga, and her involvement in various campaign efforts for equal rights; supporting pupils to learn about inequality, protest action and rights movements, and to consider the role of celebrity in advancing awareness for equality and human rights, within both a historical and contemporary framework. **This lesson also addresses bullying and suicide, which should be discussed with care. Signposting is provided.**

This lesson plan accompanies The Story Of Lady Gaga 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>I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed. SOC 3-16a</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>Provides at least two simple explanations as to why a selected group might experience inequality.</i></p> <p><i>Makes two or more reasoned suggestions of ways in which this inequality might be addressed.</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>
<p>Through discussion, I have identified aspects of a social issue to investigate and by gathering information I can assess its impact and the attitudes of the people affected.</p> <p>SOC 4-16b</p>	<p><i>Suggests the impact of a social issue and demonstrates the attitudes of those affected.</i></p>
<p>I can critically analyse the relative importance of the contribution of individuals or groups in bringing about change in a significant political event.</p> <p>SOC 4-17a</p>	<p><i>Analyses the relative importance of the contribution of individuals or groups, such as pressure groups, in bringing about change in a significant political 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
Sex





Learning Intentions
• Pupils will learn about examples of inequality and discrimination experienced by LGBT people
• Pupils will learn about factors leading to social change, including the impact of celebrity culture
• Pupils will learn about responses to inequality, including advocacy and rights movements

Success Criteria
• I can provide two detailed examples of how a community of people experiencing inequality responded to it
• I can provide an example of someone who challenged inequality and explain why they did so
• I can share an informed opinion on the impact of celebrity culture as a factor contributing to a social or political change
• I can discuss the importance of the factors which led to one or more significant historical events

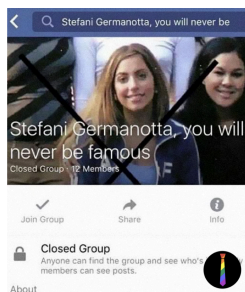
Resources accompanying this lesson

- The Story of Lady Gaga (Rights Movements and Celebrity) Third/Fourth Level (Powerpoint Slides)
- Portland Don't Ask, Don't Tell Rally (2011): [Lady Gaga's Speech](#) (YouTube Video)
- National Equality March (2009): [Lady Gaga's Speech](#) (Youtube Video)
- Lady Gaga Biography Handout (PDF)

Lesson Plan

Powerpoint Slide	Teaching Notes
<p data-bbox="142 775 320 842">The Story of Lady Gaga</p>  <p data-bbox="180 898 284 927"><small>Third/Fourth Level Rights Movements and Celebrity</small></p>	<p data-bbox="635 665 1506 790">Introduce the lesson, explaining to pupils that they will be learning about Lady Gaga, and her involvement in raising awareness of inequality experienced by LGBT people, and her role in different campaigns to address discrimination.</p> <p data-bbox="635 824 1458 920">Before beginning the lesson, ask pupils what they know about Lady Gaga. Can they name any of her songs? Do they know initially of any examples of how she has raised awareness of inequality?</p>
<p data-bbox="129 1003 568 1039">By the end of this lesson, I can:</p> <ul data-bbox="134 1059 549 1211" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide two detailed examples of how a community of people experiencing inequality responded to it. • Provide an example of someone who challenged inequality and explain why they did so. • Share an informed opinion on the impact of celebrity culture as a factor contributing to a social or political change. • Discuss the importance of the factors which led to one or more significant historical events. 	<p data-bbox="635 978 1102 1010">Discuss the Success Criteria with pupils.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1043 1485 1104">Ask pupils to keep the Success Criteria in the back of their minds as the lesson progresses.</p>
<ul data-bbox="129 1312 352 1547" style="list-style-type: none"> • Born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta in New York in 1986. • Raised into an Italian Catholic family, she learned to play piano at the age of 4 and aspired to be a musician. • She was teased by other pupils at school and considered herself to be an outsider, stating that she was insecure when she was younger.  	<p data-bbox="635 1288 1437 1319">Provide pupils with some background information about Lady Gaga.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1352 1493 1478">Her real name is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, she was born in New York and raised by an Italian Catholic family. She learned to play piano at aged 4 and always had ambitions of becoming a musician - she had a lot of talent from a young age.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1512 1506 1608">However, at school she was often teased by other pupils, and this had an impact on her while she was young. She said that she questioned her ambitions and dreams because of the teasing, and felt like an outsider.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1641 1086 1673">Is this something pupils can relate to?</p>

- Gaga experienced bullying throughout her time in education - she was often teased for her appearance and her ambitions.
- Her mother, Cynthia, said that Gaga "...went through a lot of difficult times. Humiliated, taunted, isolated."
- This impacted on her self-confidence and she questioned her aspirations.



Gaga received early acceptance to New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she studied music, but throughout her entire time in education she was heavily bullied.

She was mocked for her appearance, and her ambitions to become a successful musician. Her mother Cynthia said that "she went through a lot of difficult times. Humiliated, taunted, isolated" and this affected Gaga's self confidence.

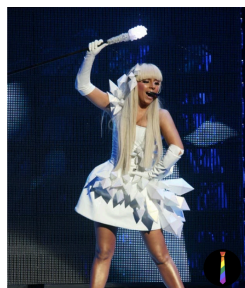
When she was at university, other students made a Facebook page mocking her ambitions - it was called "**Stefani Germanotta you will never be famous**" and was full of nasty comments about Gaga.

Nowadays she is one of the most successful artists in the world. She became the first woman in history to win an Oscar, a Grammy, a BAFTA award, and a Golden Globe in the same year!

Why do pupils think that other students teased and mocked Gaga for her ambitions? How would experiencing this have felt for Gaga?

Can pupils tell you what this type of bullying is called? (A: **online bullying or cyberbullying**)

- Aged 20, Gaga signed with Interscope Records and her music career began.
- Many of her songs focus on self-acceptance and empowerment, such as "Born This Way" and "Hair" - which she hoped would inspire her younger fans to love and accept who they are.
- From early in her career, she committed to using her fame to spread kindness.



Explain that Gaga's music career began in 2008, when she signed her first deal with a major record label.

She is known for covering themes of self acceptance and empowerment in many of her songs, such as Born This Way and Hair, which she said she hoped would inspire her young fans to love and accept themselves.

She also committed to using her fame to spread kindness.

Why do pupils think that Lady Gaga would be specifically interested in using her music and fame to send messages of self empowerment and self acceptance?

- Lady Gaga is bisexual, and she first spoke publicly about this early in her career.
- She often faced inappropriate and invasive questioning from reporters about her sexuality.
- She said: "You know what? It's not a lie that I am bisexual and I like women, and anyone that wants to twist this into 'she says she's bisexual for marketing' - this is a lie. This is who I am and who I have always been."



Let pupils know that Lady Gaga is bisexual, and she first spoke publicly about this at the beginning of her music career.

She faced a lot of inappropriate and invasive questions from news reporters and people on the internet. Many bloggers, reporters, and commentators suggested that she said that she was bisexual for "marketing", to improve sales of her records.

Gaga fought against this, saying "This is who I am and who I have always been."

Lady Gaga Insists Her Bisexuality Is Real, Not Marketing

Lady Gaga (musician) Bisexuality Sexual Orientation LGBTQ Sexuality

Lady Gaga is bisexual. Why has she always dated men? She always dated men. It means that she is straight and not bisexual.

QUEER VOICES 11/15/2013 10:11 AM EST (updated 11/27/2013 11:29 AM)

Lady Gaga Defends Her Bisexuality, 'Not A Lie'

James Michaels

America still can't accept Lady Gaga's bisexuality -- or anybody else's

Changing attitudes about the singer's orientation are just one example of the continued liberation of American culture

By [TERRY O'NEAL](#), [AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS](#)



Lady Gaga admits she's bisexual

Lady Gaga has come out as bisexual.



This slide shows an example of some headlines and blog posts regarding Lady Gaga's sexuality.

Explain to pupils that some LGBT people are often questioned about their identity - as can be seen from these examples, Lady Gaga's bisexuality has been questioned by others.

There are a lot of harmful stereotypes about LGBT people, and some bisexual people in particular can face judgment and teasing from others about their sexuality. Explain that this is an example of **biphobia** - when people deny that bisexuality is genuine, or push negative stereotypes about bisexual people.

What do pupils think about some of these headlines? Can they spot anything?

"Lady Gaga **defends** her bisexuality"
 "Lady Gaga **admits** that she is bisexual"

What are the connotations of words like this, and what impact can this have? What sort of message does this send to others?



This video shows Lady Gaga speaking at the National Equality March (2009).

The National Equality March was a rally in Washington D.C. which called for equal protection for all LGBT people across the United States and to end discrimination in employment and service provision for all LGBT people. An estimated 200,000 took part.

This was the first National March on Washington for LGBT rights since the 2000 Millennium March, and the fifth in a series of marches organised by LGBT campaigners since 1979.

Discussion

Lady Gaga delivered a speech at the National Equality March (2009) where she promised to hold President Barack Obama and his administration to account on bringing forward LGBT rights.

- What impact do you think Lady Gaga joining campaigners and protestors would have had?
- Do you think celebrities raising awareness of a cause can help? If so, why? What else is needed to achieve change?



Once they have viewed the clip, facilitate a discussion with pupils.

In her speech, Gaga promised to hold President Barack Obama and the United States Government to account in their promise to deliver LGBT rights.

What impact do pupils think Lady Gaga joining LGBT rights campaigners during the National Equality March (2009) would have had?

Do pupils think that celebrities getting involved and raising awareness of a cause which is trying to change something is helpful? If so, why?

What else is needed to achieve social or political change? (Such as pressure groups, media support, personal testimonies and stories, protests and marches...)

- In 2010, Gaga joined LGBT rights campaigners in Portland, to call for an end to Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) - an American law which banned lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from serving openly in the military.
- DADT was introduced in 1993 and prohibited any lesbian, gay, or bisexual person in the US military from discussing their sexuality and speaking about their partners with others in the military. If they did, they would be discharged.



Explain that Gaga continued to use her fame to raise awareness of inequality experienced by LGBT people across the world. We are going to consider two more examples of how she did this - Don't Ask, Don't Tell and school bullying.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell was an American law which was introduced in 1993, and banned lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from serving openly in the military. LGBT military personnel were unable to discuss their lives, relationships, partners with others in the military.

If they did, the law meant that they would be discharged and lose their jobs.

Significant Historical Event

- DADT was ended by the Obama administration in 2011, allowing lesbian, gay, and bisexual personnel to serve openly in the military for the first time.
- LGBT rights campaigners had been protesting for years to end the discriminatory law.
- A combination of different methods were effective in repealing the law: protests, lobbying from pressure groups, and high profile campaigning.



Don't Ask, Don't Tell was repealed by the Obama administration in 2011, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual military personnel were able to serve openly for the first time. This was a significant historical event.

Explain to pupils that LGBT rights campaigners had been protesting for years to end the law, which was discriminatory and an example of inequality experience by lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

Tell pupils that a combination of different methods were effective in repealing the law - campaigners protested in the streets and held marches and rallies like the one Gaga spoke at, pressure groups lobbied politicians to change the law, and the involvement of celebrities like Gaga helped increase the profile of the campaigning activities.

- In 2011, Gaga became aware that a young fan of hers had taken his life.
- She began a call for a new law to make bullying illegal, and for the rates of online bullying to be addressed, meeting with President Barack Obama to urge action.
- She said: "This must change. Our generation has the power to end it."

 LadyGaga · 10/11/11
I am meeting with our President. I will not stop fighting. This must end. Our generation has the power to end it. Trend #MakeBullyingIllegal

 LadyGaga · 10/11/11
Jamey Rodemeyer, 14 yrs old, took his life because of bullying. nyurl.com/6z7v96. Bullying must become illegal. It is a hate crime.

 LadyGaga · 10/11/11
The past days I've spent reflecting, crying, and yelling. I have so much anger. It is hard to feel love when cruelty takes someone's life.



In this part of the lesson, there is discussion about bullying and suicide. Signposting links are provided on a slide at the end of the lesson, but you should make pupils aware of the upcoming content of the discussion.

In 2011, Gaga became aware that a young fan of hers - Jamey Rodemeyer - had taken his life.

In response, she began to call for a new law to make bullying a criminal offence, and for President Obama to take action to address bullying behaviours which happen online.

She said: "This must change. Our generation has the power to end it."



This video clip from CBS News tells the story of Jamey Rodemeyer.

Social Change

- As well as Gaga's efforts to raise awareness, Kaitlin Monte and campaigners began an online petition to urge New York legislators to make online bullying illegal.
- In response, State Senator Jeffrey Klein proposed new cyberbullying legislation.
- He said: "...we're seeing modern technology used as a weapon and our laws have not kept pace with that technology."



After this happened, many people wanted to take action to end bullying and make sure that young people were safe and supported.

Lady Gaga met with President Barack Obama to discuss his administration's efforts to tackle bullying, and campaigners in New York began an online petition calling for online bullying to be made illegal.

As a result of the campaigning efforts, State Senator Jeffrey Klein proposed new cyberbullying legislation. This was not passed initially, but provided the inspiration for a similar law which came into effect in 2018 in New York.

Discussion

- What do you think about the idea that bullying should be illegal? Do you think that there is enough awareness about the impact of online bullying?
- How can we address online bullying and make sure that online spaces are safe for everyone?
- What can we do to make sure our school is free from bullying of any kind?



Facilitate a discussion with pupils about bullying.

What do pupils think about the calls of Gaga and campaigners for bullying to become illegal? Do pupils think that there is enough awareness about online bullying?

Ask pupils to consider how we can address online bullying and make sure online spaces are safe for everyone? During discussion, ensure pupils understand some important rules about online spaces: if they are experiencing bullying online, they should block the account/s and speak to someone about what is happening.

What can we do to make sure our school is free from bullying of any kind? What steps can we take as a school community?

- The "It Gets Better" campaign was launched by the Trevor Project as a response to young people being bullied because they are LGBT, or other people think they are.
- Thousands of LGBT people and supporters across the world, from celebrities to politicians, recorded video messages to send hope and support to young people who were experiencing bullying.



Explain to pupils that "IT GETS BETTER" was a worldwide campaign launched by the Trevor Project in response to young people being bullied because they are, or other people think that they are, LGBT.

For the campaign, thousands of LGBT people and supporters recorded video messages to send messages of hope and support to young people currently experiencing bullying at school.

This included many people who experienced bullying themselves, sharing advice and encouragement.



WORLD U.S. NY / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION

The Suicides of Gay Teenagers

Published: October 11, 2010

"Several Recent Suicides Put Light on Pressures Facing Teenagers" (news article, Oct. 4) underscores how both cyberbullying and depression can lead to suicide.

This video clip provides more information about the "IT GETS BETTER" campaign.

What do pupils think about this campaign?

- Inspired by her own experiences of bullying and those of some of her young fans, Lady Gaga set up the **Born This Way Foundation** in 2012.
- The main aim of the Foundation is to "Support the wellness of young people, and empower them to create a kinder and braver world."



Before moving to a final discussion, let pupils know that Lady Gaga launched the Born This Way Foundation in 2012.

Inspired by her own experiences of bullying when she was at school and university, and by the experiences fans shared with her, she set up the Foundation with her mum, Cynthia, to empower young people to create a kinder and braver world.

The Foundation works to de-stigmatise youth mental health. The vital message for all pupils is that **it is important to talk about how you are feeling** and **it is important to ask for help** when things feel overwhelming, or when they are worried or upset.

Discussion

- The "It Gets Better" campaign aimed to address homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying. Do you think this is still an issue in schools and communities today? If so, what can be done about it?
- Do you think we can learn anything from Gaga's message of kindness and acceptance? If so, what?



Ask pupils to consider whether they can learn anything from Lady Gaga's message of kindness and acceptance. If so, what?

Encourage pupils to consider what advice they would give to other young people who might be experiencing bullying? Do they know of any good advice that they can share?

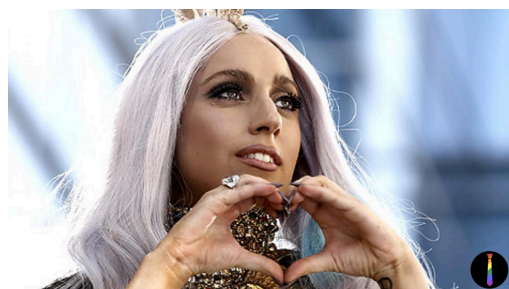
If you ever need to talk...

- You can speak to Pastoral Care in school about anything that is worrying or upsetting you
- Childline is a confidential and free 24hr helpline with trained supporters: [0800 11 11](tel:08001111)
- LGBT Youth Scotland have a digital support service every Mon, Weds and Thurs from 6pm to 8pm: lgbtyouth.org.uk
- Kooth is free, and has counsellors available until 10pm every day: kooth.com



Before finishing the lesson, ensure that pupils know how they can access support if they need to talk about anything that is worrying or upsetting them, and who they can speak to within the school.

This slide includes signposting for some services which are available outside of the school setting.



Finish the lesson.

Additional learning activities and opportunities for assessment are outlined below, including research projects and group work.

Additional Learning Activities and Opportunities for Assessment:

• Research Activity 1 (Don't Ask, Don't Tell - US)

Play the short video clip [The history of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'](#) (4m 55s) for pupils.

Next, provide pupils with a printout or computer access to this [Stanford Social Innovation Review's interview with the Palm Centre](#), which explains methods used by campaigners to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Task pupils with researching and answering the following questions in small groups:

- What was Don't Ask, Don't Tell and why was it introduced?
- Why did human rights campaigners want to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell?
- What methods did campaigners use to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell and how effective were those methods?
- What other examples of inequality do LGBT people experience across the globe today, and what are campaigners doing to address and respond to it?

• Research Activity 2 (Gay Personnel in the British Military - UK)

Play the short video clip [What Has It Been Like To Be Gay In The British Military?](#) (5m 47s) for pupils. The clip speaks to gay and lesbian personnel who have served in the British military before and after the ban on doing so was lifted in January 2000.

Task pupils with identifying any examples of prejudice, discrimination, and inequality as they are watching the clip.

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. TCH 3-02a	I can use digital technologies to process and manage information responsibly and can reference sources accordingly. TCH 4-02a
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• Class Video or Design Project: Anti-Bullying Messages

Choose some of the "It Gets Better" video stories to play for pupils. These can be accessed on the [It Gets Better Stories](#) website, and there are videos from many people that pupils will recognise, such as President Barack Obama, musician Kesha, and actress Laverne Cox amongst others.

Afterwards, task pupils with creating their own videos, in the style of the It Gets Better videos, in small groups or pairs. These can be filmed within the classroom.

Pupils should consider the following and write a short script as a group before filming their videos:

1. What message would you send to other young people about bullying?
2. What advice would you give to young people who might be experiencing bullying?
3. What support is available for young people who might be experiencing bullying?

The videos can be featured as part of school-wide activities to address bullying, such as recognising Anti-Bullying Week each November.

If pupils or groups don't want to film videos, they can follow the activity but create awareness posters instead, using Art and Design mediums, which can be displayed in the classroom or wider school community.

Ensure that in any completed videos or awareness posters, there are appropriate signposts to where support is available within school (such as Pastoral Care) and outside of school (such as [Childline](#), and [respectme - Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service](#)).

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.

HWB 3-08a / HWB 4-08a

• **Persuasive Writing Activity**

Ask pupils to choose and research another celebrity or person in the public eye who has used their fame and profile to raise awareness of LGBT equality and human rights. Task pupils with writing a persuasive essay or opinion piece about the role and impact of their chosen individuals on public awareness and attitudes.

Pupils could consider the following notable examples if they cannot find their own:

1. Diana, Princess of Wales' handshake with a patient during a visit to London Middlesex Hospital's HIV/AIDS unit in 1987.

BBC: [How Princess Diana changed attitudes to Aids](#) (4m 3s)

2. Musicians Bruce Springsteen, Demi Lovato, and Nick Jonas cancelling their concerts in North Carolina, USA to protest against the State's 2016 Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act (known as 'HB2') which human rights organisations said facilitated discrimination against LGBT people.

The Guardian: [Bruce Springsteen pulls out of North Carolina concert over anti-LGBT law](#)

Rolling Stone: [Nick Jonas, Demi Lovato Cancel North Carolina Shows to Protest HB2](#)

Pupils should try to refer to both Primary and Secondary sources when writing. They could consider the following:

1. What issue/s was your chosen individual trying to address?
2. What did they do to raise awareness?
3. What impact did they have?
4. To what extent can celebrities have an impact on social change?

I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express an opinion using a clear line of thought, relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.

LIT 3-29a

I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express and justify opinions within a convincing line of thought, using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.

LIT 4-29a

• **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 Lady Gaga's campaigning and activism.

Further LGBT Inclusive Education teaching resources:

- lgbteducation.scot/resources