



broadway's hit musical comedy

STUDY GUIDE

FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

the PROM

broadway's hit musical comedy

WELCOME

Teachers are encouraged to use this guide to elicit student discussion before the show, guide them through aspects of the production, and engage them in activities once they return to the classroom. Due to the themes of the production, this guide is designed for middle and high school students.

Our goal is to help teachers utilize the production as a catalyst for student education, collaboration, and inspiration, incorporating these essential concepts:

- The bravery and power of being true to oneself
- Creating inclusive environments where everyone is accepted for who they are
- Utilizing performance and production techniques for storytelling
- Understanding characters' situations, actions, words, and points of view
- Contemplating characters' journeys in concert with personal experience

THE PROM explores a young woman's brave struggle to find her voice that changes a community and a band of Broadway stars for the better in the process. We hope that your students, inspired by the production, can learn from you and from each other through these activities.

Please feel free to copy the materials in this guide to aid you in energizing classroom interest and discussion before and after the performance. These activities may be used separately or together as part of a cross-curricular exploration of the production.

Enjoy the show!



the PROM

THE PRODUCTION

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PRODUCTION PHOTOS BY DEAN VAN MEER

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PRE-SHOW CONSIDERATIONS

IDEAS FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW

Use the information in this guide and the web resources as a starting point to get to know *THE PROM*.

- The production celebrates a young woman declaring who she is and who she loves with the brassy help of Broadway stars in search of a cause. What will happen at *The Prom*? How will the Broadway stars help out?
- Learn what you can about theatre. How does musical theatre tell a story? How do the scenes work together? How do the songs tell the story? How do the technical aspects help?
- Take a peek at the discussion questions in the guide. Give yourself an idea of what issues, ideas, and situations the show deals with. Get a jump start for the class discussion after the show!
- Think about what your expectations of the production are: What will you see on stage? What will the story be like? How will the characters interact with each other? How will it begin and end?



Going to see a Broadway show is an incredibly exciting and entertaining experience. In order to enhance that experience, here are some things to keep in mind:

TAKE YOUR SEAT. Be sure to get to your seat in time to ready yourself for the journey you'll take with this production.

TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE. The messages and texts can wait until later - get into the world of the show completely!

GET READY TO WATCH CAREFULLY. The great thing about live theatre is that it's happening right in front of you! Be sure to soak it all in.

LET THE ACTORS DO THE TALKING. Feel free to laugh at the jokes and be moved by the drama, but save your commentary for the conversation with the class after the show.

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION. When the show is over, applaud for the actors and wait for the curtain call to be over before leaving your seat. To show them your highest praise, give them a standing ovation.



EMMA - shy and warmhearted high school senior simply wishing to dance with her girlfriend at the prom. She struggles to follow her heart against community pressures.

ALYSSA GREENE - Emma's love interest who's caught between her feelings for her girlfriend and the pressures of letting her mom know the truth of who she really is.



DEE DEE - TONY® winning actress desperately trying to increase her celebrity and publicity by tackling Emma's cause. Dee Dee discovers that true charity can outshine celebrity.

BARRY - self-involved Broadway actor eager for celebrity activism to promote his career. Barry finds a kindred spirit in Emma and guides her to be true and proud of herself.

MR. HAWKINS - concerned principal of the school and star-struck Broadway fan trying to create a prom for everyone while educating Dee Dee in self-sacrifice.

TRENT - "Julliard Trained," yet struggling, actor who utilizes his small TV celebrity to teach the students larger lessons about tolerance.

ANGIE - Experienced and knowledgeable Broadway musical veteran who champions Emma's cause and teaches Emma how to live life with Zazz!

SHELDON - Broadway publicist working his skills and connections to build his clients' celebrity status and create an audience for Emma's message.

MRS. GREENE - Alyssa's mother and president of the PTA who's committed to maintain a "traditional" prom. She's too caught up in her own cause to realize her daughter's desire to reveal who she loves.

TEENS - Indiana high schoolers who struggle together to create a place for everyone at the dance.

PARENTS - concerned parents swayed by Mrs. Greene's traditional arguments yet ready to follow their children's guidance.



ACT ONE

As the show opens Dee Dee and Barry are reveling in the opening night attention of *Eleanor!* - *The Eleanor Roosevelt Musical* as Sheldon their publicist shepherds them through the press. Dee Dee and Barry rhapsodize about the incredible characters they create who inspire and change lives ("Our Hands Are Tied") as the initial positive review arrives. As more reviews roll in, however, the criticism of the show intensifies until critics are savaging the production and the leading performers, shocking Dee Dee and Barry. Sheldon confronts them with the prospect of the production's immediate closure and their selfish and narcissistic natures as the cause. The wounded Dee Dee and Barry are comforted by fellow actors Trent, who's forever referencing his Julliard training yet waiting tables in between gigs, and Angie, who's just quit over a C-List celeb's stealing her shot at the role of Roxie in *Chicago*. Barry inspires the group to change their fortunes by becoming celebrity activists. When Angie discovers a news item about a high school girl from Indiana prevented from taking her girlfriend to the prom, the group pounces on the cause and rally themselves to action ("Ordinary Lives").

At Emma's high school in Indiana she tries to ignore the taunts and threats of her peers as she muses over her situation ("Just Breathe"). The school principal Mr. Hawkins counsels Emma on the path they'll take to confront the issue and escorts her into a raucous PTA meeting where he tries to calmly confront Mrs. Greene and other parents over their refusal to allow an inclusive prom. As the tensions rise, the celebrity activists burst in and disrupt the proceedings with Barry boldly announcing their cause as Dee Dee selfishly promotes their intentions ("It's Not About Me") to a confused and angered mob.

After the chaos subsides, a star-struck Mr. Hawkins advises Dee Dee on a less confrontational path to help Emma, which she refuses. Emma and Alyssa share an intimate moment in which they discuss the commotion and confess their simple feelings for one another ("Dance With You").

The celebrities bemoan their lowly hotel accommodations and plan their next course of action with Trent taking the lead



to write an awkward and trite anthem for them to sing at the monster truck rally Sheldon has secured for them. They execute a pained performance for Emma's cause at the rally ("Acceptance"), including Barry dressed as a black sheep, which is loudly jeered with boos and bottles hurled by the crowd.

Mr. Hawkins informs Emma that, despite the celebrity attempts to "help" the situation, and following pressure from the state, the prom is back on. Emma credits the Broadway stars with the success and accepts Barry's offer to assist in prom fashion prep. Mr. Hawkins shares a bit of Emma's hardships with Dee Dee and welcomes her offer of dinner together.

With the prom back on schedule, the students execute their "promposals" as Emma and Alyssa excitedly discuss coming out as a couple ("You Happened").

Dee Dee and Mr. Hawkins connect over dinner where, after being confronted by Mrs. Greene's animosity, Mr. Hawkins explains to Dee Dee how much musical theatre encourages him ("Look To The Stars") which inspires and comforts her.

Emma is readying in her room for the prom with Barry's fabulous assistance. As Barry recounts his own experiences and advises Emma, the other teenagers get prepared and psyched up for their special evening, while Alyssa attempts to tell her mom her truth ("Tonight Belongs To You"). Emma is escorted to the prom by her celebrity chaperones only to find a shocking betrayal perpetrated by Mrs. Greene with Alyssa's compliance that ends the act.

ACT TWO

Mrs. Greene defends herself against reporters' pointed questioning by deflecting criticism to the celebrity interlopers.

Emma is consoled by Dee Dee, Barry, Trent, Angie and Sheldon with sympathy and Häagen-Dazs. While Dee Dee believes they should cut their losses and return home, Barry convinces Sheldon to find Emma a broad audience to tell her story as Trent devises his own plan to reach the locals. Angie seizes an opportunity while alone with Emma to use her Broadway chops to teach Emma how to electrify her inner force and face the people ("Give It Some Zazz").

Dee Dee ventures to Mr. Hawkins office to receive more praise only to get a lecture on her faults. She tries to revive Mr. Hawkins' interest and faith in her by performing a song from her past ("The Lady's Improving"). Mr. Hawkins is charmed by Dee Dee's hint of humility and decides to assist in her selfless education and rekindle their friendship.

Trent engages the intolerant teens from Emma's school and convinces them to confront their own prejudices and beliefs to embrace acceptance ("Love Thy Neighbor").

Emma meets Alyssa privately and confronts her about her complicity in the prom humiliation and the status of their relationship. Alyssa opens up to Emma about the struggles and complications that define her life ("Alyssa Greene"). When Emma encourages Alyssa to go public with their love for each other, Alyssa hesitates and Emma breaks up with her.

Sheldon's efforts to find a television spot for Emma have proven fruitless but a newly enlightened Dee Dee arrives with Mr. Hawkins to explain her recent self-sacrifice. She's made an expensive trade with her heinous ex-husband which landed a prime time TV interview on his talk show. A crestfallen Emma arrives and, although appreciative of Dee Dee's generosity, reveals that she wants to tell her story in her own way— not on TV. Dee Dee explodes with frustration and is escorted out. Emma shares her plan with an understanding Barry and asks him to be her date, which he celebrates in song as he prepares ("Barry Is Going To Prom").

Emma prepares herself in her room and delivers a heartfelt message about her story and situation in a YouTube video which inspires people around the country ("Unruly Heart").

Mr. Hawkins shares Emma's video and the millions of views with the Broadway stars who marvel at its pathos and power. Mr. Hawkins reveals that, although the video is slowly changing minds, producing another prom would be too costly. Barry encourages the others to commit their credit cards to fund a new inclusive prom and everyone, even a reluctant Dee Dee, agrees.

Alyssa repeatedly watches Emma's video as her mother fusses over the attention. Alyssa then attempts to engage her mother in an important dialogue but her mother changes the subject. Emma surveys the gym being readied for another prom and regales her Broadway friends with tales of her new found celebrity. Alyssa attempts to reveal herself to her mother, confronts her treachery, and storms out of the house headed to the dance.

Mr. Hawkins sets the final preparations in motion as Barry, Dee Dee, Trent, and Angie come clean over their initial motivations to help. Mrs. Greene bursts in with concerned parents and confronts Mr. Hawkins about the community feelings over inclusiveness. Trent responds by consulting with the assembled student community who apologize to and sympathize with Emma. As the parents reflect upon their children's openness and acquiesce, Mrs. Greene caringly offers Alyssa a private talk at home. Alyssa confesses her love openly for Emma to the assembled crowd.



Alyssa and Emma revel in their newly revealed relationship and the dance begins ("It's Time To Dance"). Mr. Hawkins and the Broadway stars ready their attire as the prom energy grows. Emma and Alyssa share a kiss to great applause. The magic of a prom for all envelops everyone as the music swells.



PROMPOSAL

CREATING THE PRODUCTION

The following are excerpts from an interview conducted by Original Broadway cast member Josh Lamon with the creative team of Bob Martin, Chad Beguelin and Matthew Sklar during a launch event for *THE PROM* in NYC.

JOSH LAMON: *From your perspective as lyricist, as co-book writer, what has the show been like going through the changes from day one around the table, to the labs and Atlanta, to now?*

CHAD BEGUELIN: “It’s changed so much. I think the biggest change, I mean, we’re constantly tweaking it and working on it, but the world sort of changed. We were thinking that the world has gotten so much more accepting and wondering if this was as relevant, and then the 2016 election happened, and it suddenly became so important and so relevant. All of these things we thought we were past— suddenly the show took on this new level of immediacy. I couldn’t predict that would happen. It’s been a great journey and having this great cast has been so much fun for all of us to write for. It’s been great.

We were really concentrating on this last pass of the script and the score to make sure that we didn’t show the other side to be completely characterchures. We wanted to make sure that everyone was dealt with fairly—

these people just had different beliefs and they had to work through them throughout the show.”

JOSH LAMON: *One of my favorite things about THE PROM is that it is hilarious but also serious. We are talking about an actual story that happened.*

BOB MARTIN: “Several actually. It’s based on several incidents that happened and continue to happen across this wonderful country.”

JOSH LAMON: *What was it like tacking the comedy versus the serious material?*

BOB MARTIN: “I like the combination of making potentially unpalatable truths easier to take when they’re surrounded by people like you. You’re the sugar that makes the medicine go down easily. I think what’s really interesting about this show is that people cry, but it’s an extremely funny show. As you can see there’s a mixture of very broad comedy and the very grounded, serious story at the heart of it all. It was remarkable to have people come up to us after the show

and be so moved. I had this woman come with her head down and confess that she was the mother depicted in the story with tears in her eyes making this confession to us. I think it is a very moving show for that very reason.”

JOSH LAMON: *What was unique about this process for you?*

MATT SKLAR: “Well, it’s one of the first times I’ve ever really written something completely original from the ground up. Anything else I’ve ever written has had some kind of source material. So this was a great opportunity and I just love working with these guys [Chad Beguelin and Bob Martin] and with Casey [Nicholaw]. I think we all bring out the best in each other. The story is just so moving. Once we started outlining the story, seeing where it was going and figuring out where the songs would go, it felt like both sides complimented each other— the comedy and the dramatic aspect of it. It’s been a joy to work on.”



STUDENT ACTION

EMMA'S STORY ECHOES IN TODAY'S HEADLINES

In the production, Angie finds Emma's story in her news feed. The creators of *THE PROM* based the story, according to book writer Bob Martin, on "several incidents that happened and continue to happen across this wonderful country."

Here's a selection of recent national headlines:

2018 United States:
State Laws Threaten
LGBT Equality [-HRW.ORG](https://www.hrw.org)

Oregon High School
Principal and Resource
Officer Fired For Anti-LGBTQ
Discrimination [-WILLAMETTE WEEK](https://www.willamette-week.com)

LGBQ teens
face serious
suicide risk,
research
finds [-CNN](https://www.cnn.com)

With the prejudice Emma faces still happening,
it's important to think about solutions...

GUIDING QUESTION:

What can students do to create a culture of understanding and acceptance for everyone?

One effective approach is for students to understand what it means to be an "ally" for LGBT students in their schools and communities. Ask students to research what it means to be an ally and what concrete steps can be taken to create a safe space for everyone using the prompts below. Check out the GLSEN website and the PBS resources for further ally resources and information.

DEFINE LGBT ALLY: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

ACTION: _____

RESOURCES: <https://www.glsen.org/allyweek/betterallies>
<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fp17.lgbtq.nala.ally/how-to-be-an-ally/>



PRESSING QUESTIONS

Use the questions below to engage students in a discussion about the characters, themes, and their own personal connections.

Have students share their answers with a partner before sharing with the class.

1. Describe your first impressions of the Broadway celebrities and their need to find a “cause célèbre.”
2. What does it mean to be a “narcissist”? Is that a common condition that some people have? Why do you believe it’s a trend?
3. What do you think of Mr. Hawkins’ initial reaction to Emma’s desire to go to the prom? What’s your opinion of his character throughout the production?
4. Why do you believe Alyssa makes her difficult choice at the end of Act One? Do you agree or disagree with her decision? What would you have done?
5. Which character can you relate to the most? Why?
6. The celebrities come to help Emma but end up learning about themselves. What does Emma teach them as they spend time with her?
7. What do you think is in Barry’s personal background that helps him guide Emma along?
8. How does Dee Dee change as a person as the show comes to a close? What do you think changes her?
9. What do you think makes Emma’s video message resonate with so many other people online?
10. How is the conflict between Alyssa and her mother resolved? What do you think about the future of their relationship?
11. Emma’s story is based on current events. What stories of LGBT discrimination similar to Emma’s have you heard about? How would your community react? What could you do to confront prejudice?
12. What are the messages you’ll take from *THE PROM* ?



LANGUAGE ARTS

YOUR TASK: In order to give Emma confidence as she contemplates telling her story to a wide audience, Angie challenges her to “give it some Zazz!” using language from her theatre experiences to inspire her. This specialized terminology from a particular group is called “jargon.” Define the jargon listed below from a variety of groups and create interesting sentences utilizing them.

MEDICAL JARGON: “ADVERSE REACTION”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

BUSINESS JARGON: “SWEAT EQUITY”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

POLICE JARGON: “STANDBY”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

MILITARY JARGON: “CLICKS”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

POLITICAL JARGON: “GRASS ROOTS”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

INTERNET JARGON: “FACEPALM”

DEFINITION: _____

SENTENCE: _____

EXTENSION: List some examples of jargon that you know from groups or activities you’re involved with in your notes. Swap jargon with your classmates. Give it some Zazz!

CCSS Utilized [Grades 9-12 • Reading: 4 • Writing: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 • Speaking & Listening 1, 4]

YOUR TASK: Characters in literature and in musicals often reveal themselves directly by describing their personality and their situations. Alyssa reveals many things about herself in the aptly titled song: “Alyssa Greene.” Use the selected lyrics below to look into her character and then imagine a personal song you’d write for another character you’ve encountered in your own reading.

ALYSSA:

THE HAIR HAS TO BE PERFECT
THE “A’S” HAVE TO BE STRAIGHT
YOU HAVE TO JOIN THE DEBATE CLUB
ON THAT THERE’S NO DEBATE

YOU’LL HAVE BIBLE CAMP EACH SUMMER
TO KEEP YOU PURE AND CLEAN
ENDLESS RULES APPLY
WHEN YOU’RE ALYSSA GREENE

TROPHIES HAVE TO BE FIRST PLACE
RIBBONS HAVE TO BE BLUE
THERE’S ALWAYS SOME COMPETITION
OR HOOPS FOR JUMPING THROUGH

YOUR MOM’S MADE SACRIFICES
SO WIN HOMECOMING QUEEN
‘CAUSE IT’S DO OR DIE
WHEN YOU’RE ALYSSA GREENE

What do we learn about Alyssa’s situation in this song?

How do the activities she mentions conflict with who she’d like to be?

Can you sympathize with her after she reveals herself in this song? Why or why not?

Now think of a character you know from literature and imagine him/her singing a song revealing things about themselves. Use your notebook to identify the character (their name will be the song title) and write a short section of that song. Share the song with your classmates and compare.

CCSS Utilized [Grades 9-12 • Reading: 1, 2 • Writing: 1, 4, 5, 9, 10 • Speaking & Listening 1, 4]



SOCIAL STUDIES

YOUR TASK: Emma's brave decision to tell her story, which sparks a dialogue in her community and the country, demonstrates the power students have to create change. Recent national events have boldly illustrated the impact of student protest, yet there are other examples of student protest power from history. Research the historical movements below (*including one you find on your own*) and explain how in each situation student involvement prompted or propelled the action.

GREENSBORO SIT-INS - 1960 _____

TIANANMEN SQUARE - 1989 _____

IRAN - 1999 _____

YOUR SELECTION: _____

CCSS Utilized [Literacy in History/Social Studies • Writing 9-12: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9]

YOUR TASK: When Emma shares her story on social media it inspires others across the country. History is full of LGBT individuals who can be considered heroes. After researching the fascinating lives of Marsha P. Johnson and James Baldwin on the Internet, work through the questions below to construct portraits of these heroic figures.



Image: Wikimedia

MARSHA P. JOHNSON

Dive into Johnson's inspiring life. What elements of her personal experience do you think guided her political activism?

Why can Johnson can be considered a hero?

JAMES BALDWIN

Look up the aspects of Baldwin's inspiring biography. How do you think his complex experiences shaped his writing?



Image: Wikimedia:
Allen Warren

Why can Baldwin can be considered a hero?

RESOURCES: MARSHA P. JOHNSON: <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fp18.lgbtq.marsha.p.johnson/activism-marsha-p-johnson/>

JAMES BALDWIN: <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fp18-lgbtq-baldwin/james-baldwin/>

CCSS Utilized [Literacy in History/Social Studies • Writing 9-12: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9]



THEATRE ARTS

YOUR TASK: The creators of *THE PROM* were inspired by recent incidents involving LGBTQ youth to create Emma's compelling story. Authors often use real life events to stimulate creative work. Investigate the recent events listed below, or search for your own, and use the information you find to create an original character monologue.

LGBT STUDENTS BULLIED AND CULTURE OF HARASSMENT ENABLED BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Students in an Oregon school reported incidents of bullying and harassment, including being forced to read the bible as punishment for gay and lesbian students.

GAY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE INSPIRATIONAL YEARBOOK QUOTES CUT FROM PUBLICATION

Two openly gay Missouri high school students submitted quotes celebrating their sexual orientation that the school district deemed "offensive" and cut from the final yearbook.

HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN BARRED FROM COMING OUT IN GRADUATION SPEECH

High school senior Evan Young was planning on coming out to his parents and classmates in his valedictory speech at his charter school in Colorado. The principal banned him from delivering the speech.

Which story and character possibility are you focusing on? Why?

Describe the specifics of the character for the monologue (name, age, situation, who he/she is speaking to, main idea):

Craft your original monologue, rehearse, and perform it for your classmates!

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS - Theatre: Creating, Performing, Responding, Connecting

YOUR TASK: In the song “Unruly Heart” Emma bravely shares her inner thoughts and motivations with her social media audience. Many characters from *THE PROM* have inner thoughts and feelings they could express in a similar fashion if given the chance. Choose a character who you believe could deliver an introspective talk and plan out a presentation for their social media audience.

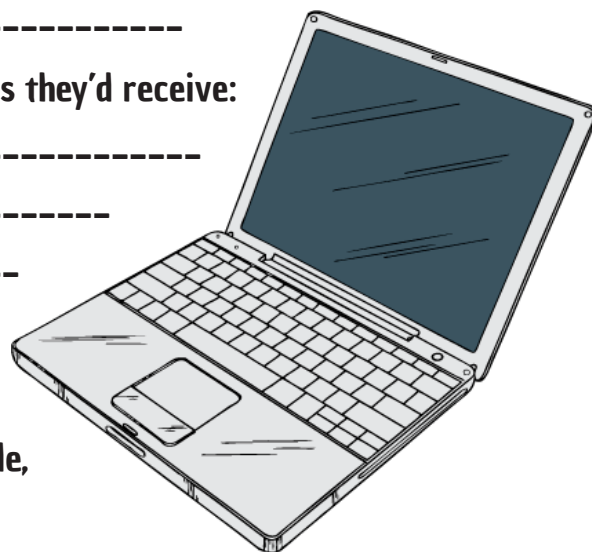
Who do you believe could deliver a potent message about their inner feelings? Why?

Outline/Describe what they’d talk about:

Who would their intended audience be? Why?

As in Emma’s situation, describe the assorted audience reactions they’d receive:

Take the time to write out the full text of speech and, if possible, rehearse and record the speech as a social media presentation.



YOUR TASK: Principal Hawkins passionately explains to Dee Dee how Broadway artists inspire as he sings “Look To The Stars.” Artists often look to masterpieces for inspiration and create their own versions of the classic work as a new artistic statement. Explore the “remixed masterpiece” below as a model for your own explorations as you look to artistic stars for inspiration.



ORIGINAL

Image: [Wikimedia](#)



REMIX

Image: [My Modern Met](#)

Describe how the artist replicated and also changed the original work called “The Scream” by Edvard Munch?

What do you think the artist intended with the twist on the original?

Which classic work of art would you remix? Use your sketchbook to experiment with your new version.

EXTENSION: Check out the modernization of classic portraits with modern celebrities:
<https://mymodernmet.com/worth1000-modern-rennaissance/>

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS - Visual Arts: Creating, Presenting, Responding, Connecting

YOUR TASK: Barry tells Emma that she has to be the “face of this story” in order to grab national attention. Artists often turn to their own visage as material for creating work, which is called a “self-portrait.” Examine the famous self-portraits below and then utilize the prompts to prepare your own.



LEONARDO DA VINCI

Image: [Wikimedia](#)



VINCENT VAN GOGH

Image: [Wikimedia](#)



FREIDA KAHLO

Image: [Wikipedia](#)

What do you notice are the similarities in the three self-portraits above? _____

What do you think each reveals about the artist? _____

Plan out how you'd create your own self-portrait and sketch it out on the back of this paper.

What artistic medium would you use? What expression would you have? Would you be looking at the viewer?

How would you be positioned? What would you be wearing? What would the composition be like?

What other objects would be in the portrait with you? What would you like the self-portrait to say about you?

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS - Visual Arts: Creating, Presenting, Responding, Connecting



TEACHER RESOURCE

INCREASING LGBTQ AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

BECOMING AN ALLY



The word “ally” means someone who advocates for and supports the people within a community other than their own. By supporting the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ youth, and taking steps to build a safer environment for all students, you can become a life-affirming ally.

BE VISIBLE

- Display symbols of support
 - ◊ Trevor Lifeline stickers
 - ◊ Trevor resource cards and brochures
 - ◊ Safe Space Poster activity (see page 21)
 - ◊ Examples of LGBTQ role models
- Promote or participate in LGBTQ visibility campaigns like: Spirit Day, National Coming Out Day, Ally Week, No-Name Calling Week, and Day of Silence.
- Use inclusive language that does not assume everyone is straight and/or cisgender.
 - ◊ For example, say “your date” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend.”
 - ◊ Try not to assume what someone’s gender identity is or what pronouns someone uses.
 - ◊ Encourage other staff allies to show their support.

BE EDUCATED

- Learn more at TheTrevorProject.org or take a Kognito Interactive Training for a deeper understanding of LGBTQ youth, suicide prevention, and ways to help.
- Explore The Trevor Project’s resources for youth, including:
 - ◊ TrevorSpace.org
 - ◊ [Trevor Support Center](http://TrevorSupportCenter.org)
 - ◊ [Trevor Lifeguard](http://TrevorLifeguard.org)
 - ◊ “Coming Out As You,” a guide that supports LGBT and questioning youth.
 - ◊ The Trevor Project’s Media List for LGBTQ Young People
- Identify local resources that are LGBTQ affirming.

EXCERPTED FROM: [TREVOR PROJECT: SAFER SPACE BRIGHTER FUTURE](http://TREVORPROJECT.ORG)



TEACHER RESOURCE

INCREASING LGBTQ AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

BECOMING AN ALLY



BE AN ADVOCATE

- Encourage reporting. Anyone who is the victim of harassment should tell a teacher, counselor, coach, school administrator or their parent/guardian.
- Invite organizations like The Trevor Project, GLSEN, and PFLAG to come talk to your youth.
- Emphasize respect and school safety by bringing our “Model School District Policy for Suicide Prevention” to your district, available at [TheTrevorProject.org](https://www.thetrevorproject.org)
- Advocate for school policies and infrastructure such as:
 - ◊ Inclusive school nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies.
 - ◊ Staff training for how to appropriately intervene when students are harassed.
 - ◊ LGBTQ-inclusive age-appropriate curriculum.
 - ° This can include history lessons on LGBTQ individuals, LGBTQ-inclusive or mindful health practices in health class, or even including LGBTQ representation in word problems in a math class.
- Address students who make homophobic, transphobic or anti-LGBTQ remarks.
- Use inclusive language that does not assume everyone is straight and/or cisgender.

Remember, becoming an ally is a continual process. This guide is just the beginning! A strong ally continues their education about the communities they support; they listen and respond to the stated needs of those communities; and they work to remove barriers to help that is often needed by those communities.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

The activity described on the next page is a great way to start building a safer space. You might choose to introduce this activity at the beginning of the year, or at the beginning of a particular learning module. No matter when you start, you can always revisit what you created later on. It's good to keep in mind that this activity is designed to make sure challenging conversations remain productive and meaningful for students of all backgrounds and experiences.

EXCERPTED FROM: [TREVOR PROJECT: SAFER SPACE BRIGHTER FUTURE](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/safer-space-brighter-future)



TEACHER RESOURCE

INCREASING LGBTQ AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

SAFE SPACE POSTER ACTIVITY



We encourage you to find whatever words work best for you – if it’s not “safer space,” maybe it’s “braver space” or “supportive space.” This is because for some young people, safer spaces may not feel realistic despite our best intentions. Talk to the youth in your group about what language makes the most sense for them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: After completing this brainstorm and activity, youth will be able to:

- List guidelines for themselves and their peers that create a safer space in their classroom;
- Follow the safer space guidelines created by the group;
- Revise the guidelines as necessary;
- Establish responses for when the safe space is broken.

1. Introduce the activity:

“It’s important to have an environment where everyone feels safe and supported. Today, I’d like us to make our [classroom/youth group, etc.] one of these positive places. This is sometimes called creating a “Safer Space” or a “Braver Space” – but we can decide the name that fits our group best. The first step is to brainstorm guidelines that will help us have respectful, productive conversations, even when we are challenged or start talking about a difficult subject. What should we call our list of agreements?”

2. After agreeing on a title, begin writing guideline ideas on the board or a poster. If your class comes up with more than 10 guidelines you can add to the list, or even vote on the top 10. Remind the class that the list can be revised at any time. Examples: Show respect; “One Diva, One Mic” (One person speaking at a time); confidentiality.

3. Confirm that the group agrees on the guidelines. Then, talk about consequences for breaking your new agreements: “Let’s discuss what happens when someone breaks our guidelines. What kinds of responses do we want to have if that happens?” (*Steer your discussion toward encouraging a dialogue between youth, and away from creating punishments or discipline.*)

4. After your agreements and conditions are finished, display your poster!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important to create a safer space for everyone?
- How could you react if you feel offended? If you offend someone?
- What should happen if someone breaks the safer space over and over again?
- What should we learn from the times when our safer space is broken?



TEACHER RESOURCE

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As with many words, terms that describe our identities can mean different things to different people. With young people, it's important to allow for fluidity and self-expression as they navigate the terms that best fit who they are. Here are a few key terms that may help you understand and empathize with the young people in your life.

ASEXUAL: A term describing individuals who do not experience sexual attraction or do not have interest in or desire for sex. It is different from celibacy, which means to abstain from sex. Like LGBTQ identities, asexuality is often viewed as a spectrum – meaning there are varying levels and identities regarding someone's emotional, spiritual, romantic, and sexual attraction. The best way to refer to the asexual community is to use the umbrella term “Ace” or “Aces” as in “the Ace Community,” which acknowledges that spectrum.

BINARY SYSTEM: A binary system is something made up of two parts that often serve as polar opposites of each other. Gender (man/woman) and sex (male/female) are examples of binary systems that society has created.

BISEXUAL: Describes someone who is attracted to men and women, or more than one gender.

CISGENDER: Someone who identifies with the sex/gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if you were assigned woman at birth and still identify as a woman, you would be cisgender.

GAY: Describes men who are only attracted to other men. Women who are attracted to other women may also use this term to describe themselves.

GENDER: A social construct based on a group of emotional, behavioral and cultural characteristics that informs how we expect people to express themselves.

GENDER EXPRESSION: How we express our gender on the outside.

GENDER IDENTITY: How we label our internal, personal sense of who we are as it relates to our gender, with terms like woman, transgender, genderqueer, man, agender, trans woman, cisgender, and many more. Gender identities aren't necessarily static and can change with time. You don't have to be an expert about every gender possibility but affirming someone's gender identity is an important part of being an LGBTQ youth ally.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING: Describes a person whose gender expression is (or appears to be) different from what is expected of their assigned gender. Other similar terms include “genderqueer,” “gender variant,” or “gender non-binary.”

GENDER PRESENTATION: How the world perceives and understands our gender.

GENDERQUEER: An identity and/or expression of gender that is neither only male nor only female. Sometimes, genderqueer present their gender expression as a combination of the two or as neither.

EXCERPTED FROM: [TREVOR PROJECT: SAFER SPACE BRIGHTER FUTURE](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/safer-space-brighter-future)



TEACHER RESOURCE

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UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS



INTERSEX: A sex identity for individuals whose hormones, chromosomes and anatomy are different than the medical community's standard sex binary system.

LESBIAN: A woman who is only attracted to other women.

NON-BINARY: Something that falls outside of the binary system. For example, someone who is not just male or female exclusively may identify as "gender non-binary."

PANSEXUAL: Describes people who are attracted to multiple sexes and genders.

PRONOUNS: Pronouns can be important for some people in the LGBTQ community. Just as some genderqueer or trans people might use a different name when they come out, they may want to use different pronouns that better correspond to their gender identity. We recommend making space for all students to identify their pronouns if they want to as a helpful way to cut back on assumptions about someone's gender identity or expression.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Describes a person's physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person.

TRANS: Trans is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses any gender identity that falls outside of the gender binary system (male/female).

TRANSGENDER: An umbrella term that describes people whose sex assigned at birth is different than their internal, personal sense of what their sex or gender truly is. For example, someone who is transgender may have been assigned "male" at birth but identifies and lives authentically as a woman today. There are many identities within this term; however, not all genderqueer, non-binary, and non-confirming people identify as transgender.

TRANSITIONING: Transitioning can be a large milestone in many trans people's lives, and it means different things to different people. People can transition in various ways: medically, legally, and socially. For some, medically transitioning is not wanted. Regardless of how a person transitions, it is important to respect their identity.

QUEER: A broad term that is inclusive of people who are not straight and/or cisgender. In the past this word was used to put-down LGBTQ people. Today many within the LGBTQ community identify as queer and have reclaimed this language to be an affirming word/identity. Queer also has political contexts for some individuals who use it.

QUESTIONING: Describes a person who is unsure of or is questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity before labeling themselves as LGBT, queer, straight or any other identity.

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EXCERPTED FROM

[TREVOR PROJECT: SAFER SPACE BRIGHTER FUTURE](#)

TREVOR RESOURCES FOR YOUTH:

- Trevor Lifeline – the only nationwide, 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for LGBTQ young people, available at 1-866-488-7386.
- TrevorChat - a free, confidential, secure instant messaging service that provides live help to LGBTQ young people, through The Trevor Project website at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/> Available at designated times every day of the week.
- TrevorSpace – an online, social networking community for LGBTQ young people, 13-24, their friends and allies (www.TrevorSpace.org).
- Trevor Support Center – a place where LGBTQ youth and their allies can find answers to frequently asked questions, and explore resources related to sexual orientation, gender identity and more ([Trevor Support Center](#)).
- Trevor Lifeguard Workshop – a structured, age-appropriate digital curriculum that addresses topics including sexual orientation and gender identity, the impacts of language and behavior on LGBTQ youth, and suicide prevention skills in schools ([Trevor Lifeguard Workshop](#)).

TREVOR RESOURCES FOR ADULTS - [Trevor Project Education](#)

- Trevor Ally Training – This training for adults informs participants about the needs and experiences of LGBTQ youth and the best practices associated with supporting and serving this unique community.
- Trevor CARE Training – This training for educators, school staff, mental health professionals, and other adults discusses LGBTQ-specific risk factors for suicide, explores protective factors, and helps attendees understand how to support LGBTQ youth in crisis.
- Kognito Interactive Trainings – The Trevor Project and Kognito Interactive have collaborated to create and distribute three exciting online interactive programs to help support LGBTQ youth in middle and high school and on college campuses.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

For Youth (Ages 16-21) - Youth Advisory Council – Young leaders from across the U.S. who are trained to help deliver The Trevor Project's programs and advise our services from a youth perspective.

For Young People and Adults (18 years-old and up) - No matter where you live in America, you can volunteer! Learn more about our volunteer opportunities for supporters who are at least 18 years old by visiting Trvr.org/Volunteer.



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PARTNER PREVENTION RESOURCES:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800.273.8255)

This lifeline is available 24/7 in both English and Spanish and serves all adults and youth. This lifeline is appropriate for anyone who identifies outside of the LGBTQ spectrum or people who prefer a general lifeline.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention ([AFSP.org](#))

AFSP is the leading organization that funds research, offers educational programs, advocates for public policy, and supports those affected by suicide.

American Association for Suicidology (AAS) ([suicidology.org](#))

AAS is a non-profit organization that works to understand and prevent suicide with comprehensive research, trainings, conferences and resources.

Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide ([sptsusa.org](#))

The mission of the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide is to reduce the number of youth suicides and attempted suicides by encouraging public awareness through the development and promotion of educational training programs.

PARTNER LGBTQ RESOURCES:

GLSEN: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network ([GLSEN.org](#))

The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.





TEACHER RESOURCE

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PARTNER LGBTQ RESOURCES (cont):

Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development, and training.

PFLAG National (PFLAG.org)

PFLAG unites people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) with families, friends, and allies. PFLAG has over 350 chapters and 200,000 members and supporters crossing multiple generations of American families in major urban centers, small cities, and rural areas in all 50 states.

GLBT Near Me (glbtnearme.org)

The GLBT National Help Center is a non-profit, organization that is dedicated to meeting the needs of (GLBT) community and those questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity. This is a national database of local resources.

The Institute for Welcoming Resources

(welcomingresources.org)

The purpose of this ecumenical group is to provide the resources to facilitate a paradigm shift in multiple denominations whereby churches become welcoming and affirming of all congregants regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gender Spectrum (genderspectrum.org)

Gender Spectrum provides education, training and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for all children and teens. Gender Spectrum provides consultation, training and events designed to help people understand and address the concepts of gender identity and expression.

EXCERPTED FROM

[TREVOR PROJECT: SAFER SPACE BRIGHTER FUTURE](#)

Advocates for Youth (advocatesforyouth.org)

Advocates for Youth champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates believes it can best serve the field by boldly advocating for a more positive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health.

Family Acceptance Project™ (familyproject.sfsu.edu)

The Family Acceptance Project™ is a research, intervention, education and policy initiative that works to prevent health and mental health risks for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children and youth, including suicide, homelessness and HIV – in the context of their families, cultures and faith communities. The Family Acceptance Project uses a research-based, culturally grounded approach to help ethnically, socially and religiously diverse families to support their LGBT children.

Trans Student Educational Resources

(transstudent.org)

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. In addition to our focus on creating a more trans-friendly education system, our mission is to educate the public and teach trans activists how to be effective organizers.

The Gender Book (thegenderbook.com)

An illustrated book - similar to educational children's books - with no age limit featuring hand-drawn graphics and easy to understand information on gender identity and expression. The goal of The Gender Book is to educate everyone (for example: doctors, friends, school-teachers, family and individuals who are exploring their gender) about gender, to be a free & widely disseminated resource that points readers towards comprehensive sources and to alleviate oppression and misunderstanding of gender minorities through education.



CONTENT STANDARDS

THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE THE ACTIVITIES WERE DEVELOPED UTILIZING THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL STANDARDS:

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

THEATRE

CREATING

- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation.
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

PERFORMING

- Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

RESPONDING

- Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

CONNECTING

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

SOURCE: <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

VISUAL ARTS

CREATING

- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Refine and complete artistic work.
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

PRESENTING

- Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

RESPONDING

- Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

CONNECTING

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS

CCSS WRITING 6-12

- Text Types & Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

CCSS SPEAKING & LISTENING 6-12

- Comprehension & Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

CCSS LANGUAGE 6-12

- Conventions of Standard English
- Knowledge of Language
- Vocabulary Acquisition & Use

LITERACY IN HISTORY, SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE & TECHNICAL SUBJECTS ANCHOR STANDARDS

CCSS READING 6-12

- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and level of Text Complexity

CCSS WRITING 6-12

- Text Types & Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

SOURCE: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

THE PRODUCTION

WEB

OFFICIAL BROADWAY SITE: <https://theprommusical.com/>

SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/theprommusical>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/theprommusical/>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/ThePromMusical/>

