

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Thematic Review: American Gay Rights Movement

Although the topic of homosexuality continues to ignite passionate debate and is often omitted from history discussions due to the sensitivity of the topic, it is important to consider gays and lesbians when defining and analyzing modern **American identity**. The purpose of this activity is to review the struggle for respect, dignity, and *equal protection under the law* that so many have fought for throughout American history. **Racial minorities**... from slaves fighting for freedom to immigrants battling for opportunity... to modern-day racial and ethnic minorities working to overcome previous and current inequities in the American system. **Women**... fighting for property rights, education, suffrage, divorce, and birth control. **Non-Protestants**... from Catholics, Mormons, and Jews battling discrimination to modern day Muslims and others seeking peaceful co-existence in this "land of the free." Where do gays and lesbians fit in? Once marginalized as criminals and/or mentally ill, they are increasingly being included in the "fabric" we call America.

#### From the Period 8 Content Outline:

**Stirred by a growing awareness of inequalities in American society and by the African American civil rights movement, activists also addressed issues of identity and social justice, such as gender/sexuality and ethnicity. Activists began to question society's assumptions about gender and to call for social and economic equality for women and for gays and lesbians.**

#### Directions and Objectives:

Review the events in the Gay Rights Thematic Review Timeline, analyze changes in American identity, and make connections to other historically significant events occurring along the way. **Highlight Cues.**

1924

The **Society for Human Rights** was founded by Henry Gerber in Chicago. The society was the oldest documented gay rights organization in America. After receiving a charter from the state of Illinois, the society published the first American publication for homosexuals, *Friendship and Freedom*. Soon after its founding, the society disbanded due to political pressure and social fears.

1948

Biologist and researcher **Alfred Kinsey** publishes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. From his research Kinsey concluded that homosexual behavior is a natural occurrence in up to 37% of American males, with approximately 10% of men actually being homosexual. While psychologists and psychiatrists in the 1940s considered homosexuality a form of illness, the findings surprised many conservative notions about sexuality and fueled social conflict already sparked by the youth rebellion of the 1920s.

1950

In Los Angeles, gay rights activist **Harry Hay** founded America's first national gay rights organization. In an attempt to change public perception of homosexuality, the **Mattachine Society** aimed to "eliminate discrimination, derision, prejudice and bigotry, to assimilate homosexuals into mainstream society, and to cultivate the notion of an ethical homosexual culture."

A Senate report titled "**Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government**" was distributed to members of Congress after the federal government had covertly investigated employees' sexual orientation at the beginning of the Cold War. The report stated since homosexuality is a mental illness, homosexuals "constitute security risks" to the nation because "those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons." Over the previous few years, more than 4,380 gay men and women had been discharged from the military and around 500 fired from their jobs with the government. The purging will become known as the "**lavender scare**." This while the FBI was led by closeted homosexual, J. Edgar Hoover.

1952

The **American Psychiatric Association** listed homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance in its first publication of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Many still held onto the 'diagnosis,' however.

1953

**President Dwight Eisenhower** signed **Executive Order 10450**, banning homosexuals from working for the federal government or any of its private contractors. The Order listed homosexuals as security risks, along with alcoholics and neurotics.

1955

In San Francisco, the **Daughters of Bilitis** became the first lesbian rights organization in the United States. The organization hosted social functions and provided alternatives to lesbian bars and clubs which were frequently raided by police. Lasted for 14 years, and became an educational resource for lesbians, gay men, researchers, and mental health professionals.

Identify two political and social obstacles faced by those seeking rights for gays and lesbians.

Explain the significance of "lavender" scare in context of major historical events playing out at the same time.

In the 1950s, what other events are occurring regarding civil rights?

Compare the battle African Americans had in battling scientific "evidence" of their inferiority to the battle faced by homosexuals.

1956

American psychologist **Evelyn Hooker** shares her paper "**The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual**" at the American Psychological Association Convention in Chicago. After administering psychological tests, such as the Rorschach, to groups of homosexual and heterosexual males, Hooker's research concludes homosexuality is not a clinical entity and that heterosexuals and homosexuals do not differ significantly. Hooker's experiment becomes very influential, changing clinical perceptions of homosexuality.

1958

In the landmark case **One, Inc. v. Olesen**, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the First Amendment rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) magazine "One: The Homosexual Magazine." The suit was filed after the U.S. Postal Service and FBI declared the magazine obscene material, and it marks the first time the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of homosexuals.

1962

**Illinois** repealed its sodomy laws, becoming the first U.S. state to decriminalize homosexuality. *For perspective...* In 1778, **Thomas Jefferson** tried to reduce the punishment for gays engaging in sodomy from the death penalty to castration. Before Illinois repealed its law in 1962s, sodomy was a felony in every state.

1965

At Independence Hall in Philadelphia, picketers began staging the first **Reminder Day** to call public attention to the lack of civil rights for LGBT people. The gatherings continued annually for five years.

1966

Members of the **Mattachine Society** staged a "**sip-in**" at the Julius Bar in Greenwich Village, where the New York Liquor Authority prohibited serving gay patrons in bars on the basis that homosexuals were "disorderly." Society president Dick Leitsch and other members announced their homosexuality and were immediately refused service. Following the sip-in, the **Mattachine Society** sued the New York Liquor Authority. Although no laws were overturned, the **New York City Commission on Human Rights** declared that homosexuals had the right to be served.

After transgender customers became disorderly in a 24-hour San Francisco cafeteria, management called police. When a police officer manhandled one of the patrons, she threw coffee in his face and a riot ensues, eventually spilling out onto the street, destroying police and public property. Following the riot, activists established the **National Transsexual Counseling Unit**, the first peer-run support and advocacy organization in the world.

1969

**Stonewall riot**: Patrons of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village rioted when police officers attempted to raid the popular gay bar around 1am. Since its establishment in 1967, the bar had been frequently raided by police officers trying to clean up the neighborhood of "sexual deviants."

Angry gay youth clashed with aggressive police officers in the streets, leading to a three-day riot during which thousands of protestors received only minimal local news coverage. Nonetheless, the event will be credited with reigniting the fire behind America's modern LGBT rights movement.

1970

**Christopher St. Liberation Day** commemorated the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Following the event, thousands of members of the LGBT community marched through New York into Central Park, in what was considered America's first **gay pride parade**. In the coming decades, the annual gay pride parade will spread to dozens of countries around the world.

1973

The board of the **American Psychiatric Association** votes to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. Some continue to treat it as a mental illness, however.

1974

**Kathy Kozachenko** became the first openly gay American elected to public office when she won a seat on the Ann Arbor, Michigan City Council.

1977

Singer and conservative Southern Baptist, Anita Bryant, lead a successful campaign with the "**Save Our Children**" **Crusade** which led to the repeal of a gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida. The gay rights ordinance was not reinstated in Dade County until 1998, more than 20 years later.

**Harvey Milk** won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and was responsible for introducing a gay rights ordinance protecting gays and lesbians from being fired from their jobs. Milk also lead a successful campaign against **Proposition 6**, an initiative forbidding homosexual teachers. A year later, in 1978, former city supervisor **Dan White** assassinates Milk. White's actions were motivated by jealousy and depression, rather than homophobia.

Compare the non-violent and more militant ways gays and lesbians fought for equality with those used by African American civil rights activists in the 1960s.

Compare the 1965 Watts riot with the 1969 Stonewall riot.

1979

**Dan White** is convicted of voluntary manslaughter and is sentenced to seven years in prison. Outraged by what they believed to be a lenient sentence, more than 5,000 protesters ransacked San Francisco's City Hall, doing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property damage in the surrounding area. The following night, approximately 10,000 people gathered on San Francisco's Castro and Market streets for a peaceful demonstration to commemorate what would have been Milk's 49th birthday.

An estimated 75,000 people participated in the **National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights**. LGBT people and straight allies demand equal civil rights and urged the passage of protective civil rights legislation.

1980

The Democratic Rules Committee stated that it will not discriminate against homosexuals. At their National Convention, the Democrats become the first political party to endorse a **homosexual rights platform**.

1981

The *New York Times* printed the first story of a rare pneumonia and skin cancer found in 41 gay men in New York and California. The **CDC** (Center for Disease Control) initially referred to the disease as **GRID**, Gay Related Immune Deficiency Disorder. When the symptoms are found outside the gay community, **Bruce Voeller**, biologist and founder of the **National Gay Task Force**, successfully lobbied to change the name of the disease to **AIDS**.

1982

**Wisconsin** became the first U.S. state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

1986

**Bowers v. Hardwick**, United States Supreme Court decision, *overturned in 2003*, upheld the constitutionality of a Georgia sodomy law criminalizing sex in private between consenting adults when applied to homosexuals. **Chief Justice Warren Burger** cited the "ancient roots" of prohibitions against homosexual sex, quoting William Blackstone's description of homosexual sex as an "infamous crime against nature", "worse than rape," and "a crime not fit to be named." Burger concluded: "To hold that the act of homosexual sodomy is somehow protected as a fundamental right would be to cast aside millennia of moral teaching."

1987

**AIDS** advocacy group **ACT UP** (The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) is formed in response to the devastating effects the disease had on the gay and lesbian community in New York. The group held demonstrations against pharmaceutical companies profiteering from AIDS-related drugs as well as the lack of **AIDS** policies protecting patients from outrageous prescription prices.

Hundreds of thousands of activists took part in the **National March on Washington** to demand that **President Ronald Reagan** address the **AIDS crisis**. Although AIDS had been reported first in 1981, it was not until the end of his presidency that Reagan spoke publicly about the epidemic. There was much criticism hurled toward government and society in general for ignoring AIDS because it was a "gay disease."

1988

The **CDC** mailed a brochure, **Understanding AIDS**, to every household in the U.S. Approximately 107 million brochures are mailed. Massive education campaign aimed partially to end discrimination of those with the disease and also educate Americans on how to avoid contracting it.

The World Health Organization organized the first **World AIDS Day** to raise awareness of the spreading pandemic.

1990

**President George Bush** signed the **Ryan White Care Act**, a federally funded program for people living with AIDS. **Ryan White**, an Indiana teenager, contracted AIDS in 1984 through a tainted hemophilia treatment. After being barred from attending school because of his HIV-positive status, Ryan White became the poster child and well-known activist for AIDS research and anti-discrimination. White died in 1990.

1991

Created by the New York-based **Visual AIDS**, the **red ribbon** is adopted as a symbol of awareness and compassion for those living with **HIV/AIDS**.

In 2008, after 15 years in the making, the story of Harvey Milk hit the big screen. In 2009 Stuart Milk accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in on behalf of his uncle, Harvey Milk. Explain the significance of Milk's life, death, and story.

Explain the historical significance of and legacy of Ryan White.

Compare Ryan White to Ruby Bridges.

1993

The Department of Defense issued a directive prohibiting the U.S. Military from barring applicants from service based on their sexual orientation. "Applicants... shall not be asked or required to reveal whether they are homosexual," stated the new policy, which still forbade applicants from engaging in homosexual acts or making a statement that he or she is homosexual. This policy was known as "**Don't Ask, Don't Tell**" and was supported by **President Bill Clinton**. The policy prohibited people who "demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" from serving in the armed forces of the United States, because their presence "would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability"

1996

In the case of **Romer v. Evans**, the United States Supreme Court decided that Colorado's 2nd amendment, denying gays and lesbians protections against discrimination, was unconstitutional.

President Clinton signs the **Defense of Marriage Act** into law. The law defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman and that no state is required to recognize a same-sex marriage from out of state.

1997

**Ellen DeGeneres** revealed her homosexuality on national television (on the Oprah Winfrey Show) and then her character "came out" on her hit sitcom, **Ellen**. The coming-out episode was one of the highest-rated episodes of the show, but the show was soon cancelled due to a dramatic drop in ratings. Although the topic of gay characters on television wasn't new, the national discussion intensified greatly. (the first gay television character was on *All in the Family*; 1971) A year before Ellen's coming out, a popular show called *Friends* included a lesbian couple who have a baby together. Today gay characters are too numerous to count.

1998

**Matthew Shepard** was tortured and murdered near Laramie, Wyoming because of his sexual orientation. **James Byrd** was tortured and murdered because of the color of his skin in Jasper, Texas. These deaths inspire future legislation against hate crimes (see 2009).

**Coretta Scott King**, widow of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., called on the civil rights community to join the struggle against homophobia. She received criticism from members of the black civil rights movement for comparing civil rights to gay rights.

1999

Christian evangelist, **Jerry Falwell** alleged that the character, **Tinky Winky**, on a popular television show, *Teletubbies*, was a "gay role model". He warned parents that Tinky Winky could be a covert homosexual symbol, because "he is purple, the gay pride color, and his antenna is shaped like a triangle: the gay pride symbol, he speaks with a male voice and carries a purse." The BBC made an official response, "Tinky Winky is simply a sweet, technological baby with a magic bag. He's not gay. He's not straight. He's just a character in a children's series." Millions of Tinky Winky characters were sold nationwide as it becomes an embraced gay pride symbol. Falwell also claimed that AIDS was God's punishment of homosexual behavior as well as punishment against a society that tolerates homosexual behavior.

2000

**Vermont** became the first state in the U.S. to legalize **civil unions** and registered partnerships between same-sex couples.

2003

In **Lawrence v. Texas** the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that sodomy laws in the U.S. are unconstitutional.

2004

**Massachusetts** became the first state to legalize **gay marriage**. The court found the prohibition of gay marriage unconstitutional because it denied dignity and equality of all individuals. In the following six years, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Iowa, Washington D.C., Maine, Maryland, Washington followed suit.

2007

Sponsored by the **Human Rights Campaign**, the Logo cable channel hosts the first American presidential forum focusing specifically on LGBT issues, inviting each presidential candidate. Six Democrats participate in the forum, including Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, while all Republican candidates decline.

To what extent were Bill Clinton's views on homosexuality more progressive than Dwight Eisenhower's?

Compare Shepard's death and legacy to James Byrd's.

Explain the social and religious conflict surrounding Corretta Scott King's support for gay rights.

2008

California voters approved **Proposition 8**, making same-sex marriage in California illegal. The passing of the ballot garnered national attention from gay-rights supporters across the U.S. Prop 8 inspires the **NOH8 campaign**, a photo project that used celebrities to promote marriage equality. Prop8 was found unconstitutional in 2010, which was upheld upon appeal in 2012, and it is expected to go before the U.S. Supreme Court summer of 2013.

2009

**President Obama** signed a **Presidential Memorandum** allowing same-sex partners of federal employees to receive certain benefits. The memorandum does *not* cover full health coverage.

2009

The **Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act**, better known simply as the **Matthew Shepard Act** was passed by Congress and signed into law by **President Obama**. The measure expanded the 1969 **U.S. Federal Hate Crime Law** to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

2010

The U.S. Senate voted 65-31 to **repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"** policy, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the U.S. Military.

2011

**President Obama** stated his administration will no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act, signed by President Clinton, which banned the recognition of same-sex marriage.

**New York State** passed the **Marriage Equity Act**, becoming the largest state thus far to legalize gay marriage.

2013

**Tammy Baldwin** was sworn in as the first openly gay United States Senator.

2013

Supreme Court rules against **Defense of Marriage Act & Proposition 8**. Gay marriage once again legal in California. [37 states now allow gay marriage.]

How did the Supreme Court rule on Prop 8?

Polls reveal that those born after 1981 have dramatically different views on homosexuality than those born prior. What do you predict will happen in future years regarding protection for gays and lesbians?

Some fear social-cultural changes regarding homosexuality will result in anti-Christian sentiment similar to the reverse discrimination that resulted from racial and gender affirmative action. Are these fears warranted? Why or why not?

One of the most difficult aspects of this historical thread is analyzing the battle to separate religious or moral beliefs with policies aimed at supporting the freedom to pursue one's own happiness. Other modern topics that burn on in this manner include abortion, euthanasia, and stem-cell research. Keeping Church and State separate is easier said than done, although America has increased the separation in recent years with issues like school prayer, birth control, and right to privacy. Now part of the challenge facing America is whether or not the federal government should protect rights, redefine rights, and/or fund rights to things that seem to cross that line of religion/state.

...Should we, the people, Amend the Constitution to define marriage as one man and one woman? Or is this a state issue?  
...Should marriage be open to same sex couples and protected by the federal government?  
...What about multiple partners (polygamy), which is currently illegal in all 50 states?

...Should we, the people, Amend the Constitution to define human life as beginning at conception? Or is this a state issue?  
...Should an unborn baby have the same rights as one who is born?  
...Should embryos in Petri dishes have the same rights as a baby who is born?  
...Should American tax payers and/or businesses be forced to fund programs that deal with abortion, birth control, or stem-cell research if they find it immoral?

...Should we Amend the Constitution to ban all forms of suicide, including assisted suicide or euthanasia? Or is this a state issue?

...Should the federal government remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance?  
... What about "in God we trust" from currency?  
...What about the Bible (and other religious books) in court meetings and ceremonies?

Is the American identity one of separation or inclusion? Explain your answer.

Does increased tolerance mean the same thing as increased immorality? Explain your answer.

What does it mean to be an American in 2015? To what extent are Americans ensured their rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness?