

Lesson Plan Suggestions to go with the “Timeline of Wisconsin LGBTQ History”

A Note to the Teacher

Only a sampling: Although this timeline is lengthy, it is only a sampling of actions and events in LGBTQ history in Wisconsin. Teachers and students using the timeline are encouraged to add items from their own knowledge and/or research to make it more complete.

Length

Because this Wisconsin list of LGBTQ history is so lengthy and detailed, care must be taken to make it accessible to high school students. That is the main purpose of this lesson plan. Several suggestions are offered for introducing students to the timeline and helping them get more involved in it.

Objectives for students:

- To see that there has been a lot of activity around LGBTQ issues from the late 1800s through today with a concentration from the 1970s and beyond
- To understand watershed events in LGBTQ history (the 4 divisions of the timeline)
- To categorize history items as individual, governmental, and group (organization) actions, or items that are media oriented in order to understand the scope of the activities and events
- To discover the positive direction of LGBTQ history in Wisconsin and understand how organizations and government have contributed to that progress
- Through mapping, to realize that while the majority of listed items might be in Milwaukee and Madison, LGBTQ issues have surfaced in many areas of the state

Materials needed

- **Timeline of Wisconsin LGBTQ History** – one complete copy and one complete key for the teacher, entire timeline or portions of the timeline for each student or for 6 small groups of students (See below for how to split the timeline for work on decades.) *All students should receive the first page of the timeline regardless of what else they get so they can see the organization into 4 time periods.*
- **Categories for the Timeline** - copy of key for each student or small group to use (Sheet provided has 3 keys.)
- **Wisconsin Timeline Record Sheet** – copy for each student or group working on 1970s, 80s, or 90s
- **Wisconsin Timeline Chart** – Copy for teacher, optional to give this to students
- Wisconsin highway map (6 maps if you want a map for each group of students)
- pink highlighter or small stick-on dots or stars
- transparency or loose leaf paper - for listing organizations and publications

Procedure

1. Decisions to make ahead of time

- whether to copy the entire timeline for each student or small groups (pairs or trios) or whether to break it into sections and give sections to students or small groups
- whether to have students fill out the chart that’s provided or whether to have only one chart for an overhead projector which will be filled out during discussion
- whether to split the class so that some are working on mapping, some on listing organizations and/or publications, and some on categorizing the items

2. Introduction.

- Tell students that you will be giving them a lengthy timeline of LGBTQ history in Wisconsin, and that they will be working as a class to make sense of it. But before handing it out, ask, “What do you already know about LGBTQ history in Wisconsin?” Write the mentioned items on the board. Tell students that they will probably be very surprised at just how much has happened in our state. Be sure to point out that this is just a *sampling* of items. People in each locality may know of more organizations and activities that could go in to the timeline.
- Hand out the first page of the timeline. Have students note that the list is already divided into 4 different time periods, and have them find out what years are allocated to each. Write the dates on the board. Have the titles read aloud. Discuss why the list might be divided up this way.
- If you have given students the entire timeline, have them find out how many pages are in each of the 4 sections (1 ½, 7 ½, 14, 1 ½). Do they have any comments on what they discover?

3. Describe how you want students to deal with the timeline. These are some choices. You may choose to use all these methods for the entire class or assign individuals or groups to do the different activities. Since there are a variable number of items to deal with in each decade, there’s an opportunity to make assignments based on the ability and interest of your students. The most challenging decades are the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

A. TIME PERSPECTIVE (Segmenting the list by decade, counting entries, and putting that information on the chart)

- Have students **segment the list by decades** by drawing lines across the page at the end of each decade (1890-1899, 1900-1909, 1910-1919, 1920-1929, etc.). Students can list the decade in the left margin. To make this faster, divide the class into 6 groups, assigning 1890-1949 to one set of students, 1950s and 1960s to another set, and then the decades of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s to 4 other groups.
- Students should then **count** the number of items in each decade. Put the number in a circle next to the decade number. (Refer to the KEY for the SUMMARY CHART for totals.)
- **Discuss** the findings. Ask, “What happened in Wisconsin and in the U.S. that would account the sudden, dramatic increase in items in the 1970s and 1980s?”

B. CATEGORIZING THE ITEMS. This will get students into the content of the timeline.

- Ask students to look over the items in the 1970s (or whatever time period they have in front of them.) What categories of items do they see?
- Give students **Categories for the Timeline** key and read through it aloud. Answer any questions. You might want to read a couple of items and ask the class how they would categorize them.
 - G = Government action (includes state & local government & politicians, schools)
 - I = Individual actions (includes books written by individuals)
 - MM = Mainstream media (reports in newspapers, on radio, or TV)
 - O = Organizations (establishment of LGBTQ organizations or activities they did)
 - Pg = Publication in LGBTQ papers or magazines
 - S = Social groups or activities (includes bars and sports tournaments)
 - E = Events that don’t fit in any of the above categories.

- Ask students to categorize the items in the decade or decades they looked at. Put the key letters in the left-hand margin. Also, give each item a + or – to show whether they were positive or negative for LGBTQ people.
- Make the rounds of the class as students work, helping them decide problem items and discussing what they are learning and how they are feeling about the items.
- When they have finished putting the codes in the margin, give the students with 1970s, 1980s, & 1990s the **Wisconsin Timeline Record Sheet** and ask them to record the results for each page and then figure the totals. Give all others the **Wisconsin Timeline Chart**. They will be able to record the results for their decades easily since their decades have limited entries.
- Display the **Wisconsin Timeline Chart** on the board if you're able, and ask each group to enter or tell you their data.
- Discuss what is revealed by the chart. (KEY is included with this packet. Students may code items somewhat differently. Don't be too concerned. The general picture is what's important.)

C. MAPPING THE ITEMS

- Ask students to go through the items assigned to them and circle the location (city, county, or region) associated with each item.
- Map these on a highway map of the state of Wisconsin. Using a star or dot for each city works well. Or simply have students use a pink highlighter. You may choose to have each of the six groups map their data on a separate map, or show it all on one map. Another way would be to use the 4 time periods indicated in the timeline, and map the items on 4 different maps.
- Discuss what is revealed by the map.

D. NOTING THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

Note that government can both help and hinder the lives of LGBTQ people. Ask students to look at government actions. Which have helped? Which have hindered? What have individuals in government done to help? What have law-making bodies done? What have voters done?

E. LISTING THE LGBTQ ORGANIZATIONS

Many different LGBTQ organizations are mentioned in the timeline. Students may use loose leaf paper or list them on the board. The purpose of this activity is to help students realize the amount of organization that has gone on to make life better for LGBTQ people in our state.

F. LISTING THE LGBTQ BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

A number of books, newsletters, or newspapers by and for LGBTQ people are listed in the timeline. Students may use loose leaf paper to list the names of these publications or write them on the board.

G. EXPANDING ON THE TIMELINE

Students could spend time researching events that have occurred since the end of the timeline, adding to more recent LGBTQ history in Wisconsin and beyond.