



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Senior Cycle

English Resource



Teacher Notes: Pedagogical Approach for Lessons

- **Create safety together:** We suggest that a way to begin Stand Up Awareness Week lessons is by co-constructing classroom agreements with your students that emphasise safety, respect and confidentiality. This helps everyone feel secure and valued. Display the agreements in the classroom or keep a copy in student journals or copies. What values are important to your students and what do they need to feel respected and safe?
- **Keep an open mind:** Use language that welcomes all identities and experiences, avoiding assumptions about sexuality, gender or family structure. (all voices included)
- **Pause and reflect:** Take time to notice your own comfort levels, possible biases, or areas where you might want to grow your knowledge. This modelling of reflection shows students that learning is ongoing for everyone.
- **Support deeper learning:** Give students opportunities to think quietly, speak when ready, reflect individually and ask questions. A layered approach helps everyone engage at their own pace.
- **Protect student choice:** Encourage participation, but never expect or ask students to share personal stories in order to make the learning 'real'. Their voices matter, but their privacy matters too.
- **Shape respectful dialogue:** Debate and discussion can be powerful, but not every issue should be up for debate. Work with your students to agree on safe and respectful boundaries for discussions, so the classroom remains supportive for all.
- **Belong To's** e-learning module is a fantastic resource to learn how to best create a safe inclusive environment at school. (Accessible at: <https://www.belongto.org/training/>)
- **Free speech is not hate speech!** Hateful comments are never acceptable.
- The resources listed here promote inclusion and belonging and are intended as an aid for schools to help implement their **Bí Cineálta policy**.

Theme: Identity, Voice and Relationships

Duration: 60 minutes (adaptable)

Context: Stand Up Awareness Week (Belong To)

Curriculum Alignment – Senior Cycle English (Specification 2019)

This lesson supports the following learning outcomes (LOs):

- **OL 1:** Engage personally with texts and explore ideas of identity, diversity and human experience.
- **OL 3:** Engage in meaningful discussion, listening actively and responding thoughtfully to others' perspectives.
- **OL 13:** Reflect on and evaluate relationships, power dynamics and cultural representation in texts and society.

Learning Intentions

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

1. Explore identity and belonging through storytelling and dialogue.
2. Critically examine power dynamics in conversations about LGBTQ+ inclusion.
3. Analyse and reflect on different types of relationships - romantic, familial, platonic, intimate.

Lesson 1: Relationship Mapping – Romantic, Familial, Platonic, Intimate

Purpose: Encourages critical literacy about representation, diversity, and equality in texts.

1. Students are given the '**relationship mapping worksheet**' at the bottom of this resource with three circles:
 - a. Platonic
 - b. Familial
 - c. Romantic
2. In pairs, they map examples of these relationship types from:
 - Literary texts studied in class (e.g. Shakespeare, contemporary, poetry, novels etc).
 - Their own examples from TV, movies and social media.
3. Students then reflect:
 - Which types of relationships are most represented in literature studied so far?
 - Which are underrepresented or stereotyped?
 - How can inclusive representation challenge views of traditional relationships?
 - What are the challenges to representation, diversity and equality in literature and media?

Lesson 2: Book Club Activity or Drop Everything and Read Initiative

Choose an age-appropriate book from childrensbooksireland.ie that explores LGBTQ+ themes.

As a class or book club, discuss the following questions:

1. General Questions:

- a. Whose voices are centred in this story? Whose are missing?
- b. How does the text challenge or reinforce stereotypes about gender, sexuality, or relationships?
- c. What power dynamics are present between characters? How are they resolved or left unresolved?
- d. How does the setting (time/place/culture) influence the characters' ability to express identity or belong?
- e. What emotions did the story evoke for you? Why?
- f. If you could rewrite one scene to make it more inclusive, what would you change?

2. Romantic Relationships

- a. How is love portrayed in this story? Is it idealised, realistic, or complicated?
- b. Are LGBTQ+ romantic relationships treated differently than heterosexual ones in the narrative?
- c. What barriers do characters face in expressing romantic feelings?

3. Familial Relationships

- a. How do family dynamics shape the characters' sense of identity?
- b. Are there examples of chosen family or non-traditional family structures?
- c. How do generational differences affect acceptance or understanding?

4. Platonic Relationships (Friendship)

- a. What makes the friendships in this story strong or fragile?
- b. How do friends support or challenge each other's identities?
- c. Are friendships portrayed as safe spaces for self-expression?

Reflective Exercise: Discussion or Journaling:

1. How has exploring different types of relationships in literature and media influenced your understanding of identity and belonging?
2. Think about a moment in one of the texts where a character's voice was silenced or empowered-how did that affect your perception of inclusion and representation?
3. What personal connections did you make during the relationship mapping activity, and how did those connections shape your views on diversity and equality in storytelling?

Relationships Mapping Worksheet: Platonic, Familial and Romantic

