



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Senior Cycle History Resource

Exploring Inclusion and Diversity in History



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 and respect. 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**.

Year: 5th Year

Strand: The Nature of History / Modern Ireland / International Relations (adapt as needed)

Learning Intentions

- Students will explore how diverse identities have shaped history.
- Students will critically examine whose stories are told and whose are left out.
- Students will reflect on the importance of inclusion in understanding the past and present.

Materials Needed

- 'Heritage Shield' handouts (template provided)
- Flipchart, digital board or whiteboard
- Short video clip on diversity in Irish history
- Post-its or digital sticky notes

Suggested Classroom Activities

Warm-Up: 'History Spectrum' Standpoint Line

Teacher reads out pairs of statements. Students stand or position themselves along a line in the room using tape or string. You can use digital polls if space doesn't allow for movement. The teacher allocates one side of the line to one statement and the other side of the line to the other statement. When the statements have been read out, students move to the side allocated to the statement they agree with most.

Suggested Statements:

1. "History is objective fact." vs. "History is shaped by perspective."
2. "History is written by the victors." vs. "History includes all voices."
3. "History is about dates and events." vs. "History is about stories and experiences."
4. "History is complete." vs. "History is constantly being rewritten."
5. "History is national." vs. "History is global."
6. "History is about progress." vs. "History is about cycles and patterns."
7. "History is neutral." vs. "History is political."
8. "History belongs in textbooks." vs. "History lives in communities."

Debrief: What shapes our view of history? Who decides what is remembered? Who decides what is documented? Can there be different versions of history according to where you are standing or other factors? Teacher can record answers on the board.

Activity 1: Heritage Shield

Students fill in a 'Heritage Shield' with aspects of their own identity (e.g. family background, culture, beliefs, language, interests, community etc.). They can write an example or provide an illustration that symbolises each of these aspects.

Think-Pair-Share: Which parts of your heritage or identity do you see reflected in history lessons? Which are missing?

Find a heritage shield template at the end of this resource.

Activity 2: Video Clip – 'Hidden Histories'

Watch a short video highlighting a lesser-known figure or group in Irish or world history (e.g., LGBTQ+ activists, Traveller history, women's movements, migration stories).

Sample video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRipQ-3Q-Ts>

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. Why do you think some stories are less visible in history books?
2. Does hearing these stories change your views in any way?
3. What might be the impact of leaving out certain voices?

Activity 3: Creative Group Task – 'History Reimagined'

In small groups, students choose an Irish historical event or era and create an imagined 'artefact' to provide voices to those who are missing in the common telling.

1. Irish War of Independence (1919–1921)
• Missing voices: Women involved in intelligence work (e.g. Cumann na mBan), LGBTQ+ individuals, working-class civilians.
• Artefact from a reimagined perspective: Create a poster from a young woman courier or an LGBTQ+ volunteer navigating secrecy and danger.
• Creative angle for artefact: What if the revolution was told through the eyes of those who weren't allowed to lead it?

2. The Great Famine (1845–1852)
• Missing voices: Tenant farmers, children, disabled people, Irish speakers, Travellers.

• Artefact from a reimagined perspective: Create a social media post from a child describing daily survival or a poster in Irish language.
• Creative angle for artefact: What if the famine story was told by those who couldn't emigrate?

3.Decriminalisation of Homosexuality (1993)
• Missing voices: LGBTQ+ youth, rural LGBTQ+ communities, trans individuals.
• Artefact from a reimagined perspective: Create a poster campaign from a rural LGBTQ+ support group in the 1980s.
• Creative angle for artefact: What if Ireland had listened to LGBTQ+ voices earlier?

4. Industrial Schools and Magdalene Laundries
• Missing voices: Survivors, children, unmarried mothers, religious dissenters.
• Artefact from a reimagined eimagined perspective: Create a social media post from a survivor advocating for justice and remembrance.
• Creative angle for artefact: What if these institutions were challenged publicly in their time?

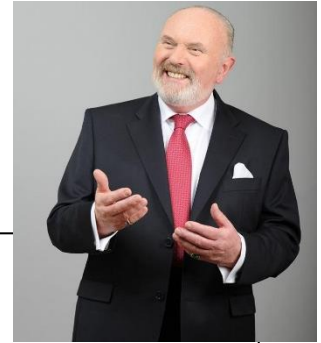
5. Women's Right to Vote (1918 onward)
• Missing voices: Working-class women, women of colour, Irish Traveller women.
• Artefact from a reimagined eimagined perspective:Create a poster from a suffragette rally including diverse voices.
• Creative angle for artefact: What if all women had been included from the start?

Closing Activities

- Group Reflection: What surprised or challenged you today?
- Reflective Journal Prompt: One thing I've learned about inclusion in history is...

Extension or Homework

Research a lesser-known figure or group in Irish or world history and prepare a short presentation or creative piece (collage) that peer-teaches others about their impact on the world.



Case Study: Senator David Norris – Scholar, Activist and Politician

Background: David Norris is a former Trinity College Dublin lecturer and a long-time human rights activist. He is widely recognised as the leading figure in the campaign to decriminalise homosexuality in Ireland.

Key Contributions:

In the 1970s, Norris co-founded the Sexual Liberation Movement and later the Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform. [\[Link to more info\]](#)

In 1977, he challenged Ireland's laws criminalising homosexuality in the Irish courts, arguing they violated the constitutional right to privacy. Though unsuccessful in Irish courts, he took the case to the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in his favour in 1988, stating that Ireland's laws breached the European Convention on Human Rights. [\[Link to more info\]](#) This landmark ruling led to the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland in 1993. [\[Link to more info\]](#)

Norris became the first openly gay person elected to the Irish Senate in 1987 and served for decades, advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, civil liberties and cultural heritage.

Legacy: David Norris is considered a trailblazer in Irish LGBTQ+ history. His courage and persistence helped transform Ireland's legal and social landscape, paving the way for future reforms including civil partnerships and marriage equality.

Case Study Analysis: Explore how Norris used legal and political channels to challenge injustice in Ireland.

Timeline Creation: Map key milestones in Irish LGBTQ+ history, starting with Norris's activism.

Debate Prompt: "How can individual activism influence national law and social attitudes?"

Reflection Task: What does David Norris's story teach us about inclusion and resilience?

Heritage Shield

Family	Community
Beliefs/ Values	Language(s)
Migration/Roots	Other (e.g. traditions, interests, etc)

