



STONEWALL LESSON PLANS – LGBT History Month Poetry

This LGBT History Month, we're focussing on poetry and designed these lesson plans to help you celebrate with your students. LGBT History Month was founded by Schools Out, who have been campaigning for LGBT inclusive education for 46 years. Adapt the lesson plan to best suit the needs of your class and to fit the amount of time you have available. We have also developed lesson plans on this theme for students with SEND – these can be found on our website. Other suggested resources are noted in each lesson plan. This lesson is based around two poems: *Before You Were Mine* by Carol Ann Duffy can be found in the GCSE Poetry Anthology or from the source listed below. The poem *what my mother (a poet) might say* is available from the source below as well as in Mary Jean Chan's book *Flèche*.

Who are Stonewall?

This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people. At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full. Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter. To find out more about our work, visit us at www.stonewall.org.uk.

Enjoyed this resource? Join us today!

Our expert team of qualified teachers and trainers have supported hundreds of settings in their inclusion journeys to make sure all children and young people are free to be themselves. [Our membership programmes for schools and colleges, and for children and young people's services, have something to offer every setting.](#) Join us today and benefit from:

- CPD-accredited e-learning modules
- Regular professional development webinars
- Access to our award schemes
- Personalised support from our team

All this, and more, is included in the price you pay for membership.



Looking for custom training? Our experienced trainers can provide quality training sessions for ITT providers, teaching schools, professional development networks and many other providers. Email us education@stonewall.org.uk to find out more and discuss your needs.

Key Stage 4 – England and Wales

P4 to S5 – Scotland

Learning objective: To be able to compare the language used in poems with similar themes

Activity	Details	Resources
Pairs: Compare the poems	<p>Students work in pairs to read and then compare the poems <i>Before You Were Mine</i> by Carol Ann Duffy and <i>what my mother (a poet) might say</i> by Mary Jean Chan.</p> <p>You can find the poems here: https://genius.com/Carol-ann-duffy-before-you-were-mine-annotated https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/what-my-mother-a-poet-might-say/</p> <p>They should identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The common theme of the two poems • Use of cultural references • Similarities and differences in relation to language usage 	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Comparison PowerPoint – KS4 S4 and S5 to S6 <p>Other resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before You Were Mine by Carol Ann Duffy (available at https://genius.com/Carol-ann-duffy-before-you-were-mine-annotated) • what my mother (a poet) might say by Mary Jean Chan (available at https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/what-my-mother-a-poet-might-say/)
Whole class: Discussion	<p>Ask students to identify the common theme of the poems: their mothers.</p> <p>How are the poems different in structure and language usage? How does that impact the feel of the poem and the way in which the two mothers are portrayed?</p> <p>Discuss the poets' relationships to their mothers and their mothers' histories. Are they positive associations? Share that both Carol Ann Duffy and Mary Jean Chan</p>	



	<p>are lesbians. How could that potentially affect their relationships with mothers? How could cultural heritage impact that?</p> <p>You could discuss that in China, it was illegal to be gay up until the change of law in 1997 and until 2001 being gay was classified as being a mental illness. This may have had an impact on Mary Jean's mother's attitude towards her daughter being a lesbian. However, it is essential to highlight that this does not mean that all Chinese people or people of Chinese heritage are homophobic, biphobic or transphobic. You could also discuss with students how attitudes towards LGBT people have shifted and changed within the UK – for example, up until 2003 Section 28 prevented schools from talking about and celebrating LGBT people.</p>	
Individual: Poem comparison	Students answer the question: What are the common features shared by <i>When You Were Mine</i> by Carol Ann Duffy and <i>what my mother (a poet) might say</i> by Mary Jean Chan?	
Plenary: Self-assessment	As a class, identify the key points that students needed to put in their answer. Students self-mark.	