

Who was Alan Turing and why should we care?

Legal and social changes in Britain that affected LGBTQ+

Guidance Notes and Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- To gain knowledge of the legal and social changes since the 1950s regarding same-sex relationships
- To develop understanding of the reasons for changing social attitudes and how this influenced legal changes
- Siting Alan Turing within these changes

Introduction

This is the first of two lessons looking at the legal, social and cultural changes in the UK since 1945, relating to same-sex relationships and LGBTQ+ people. This may be a sensitive area for some of the students; therefore, teachers must ensure that all voices are heard and that everyone feels safe. If necessary, it may be useful to revisit the 'challenging Histories and a shared space for learning' slides from lesson one. It would also be helpful to clarify any terminology the teacher feels any of their students may struggle with and to set boundaries for comments and discussion.

The timeline shown on slide 1 could be printed for display, or one per student if following the alternate approach to the starter activity. Note also that both the YouTube clips used in the starter activity can be played from the presentation (slide 2), making it easier to switch back to the timeline for the discussion questions after viewing them.

Key Information

This lesson is designed for students aged 13 and above. It is devised for History classes.

The timings suggested are based on a one-hour lesson and may need adapting based on circumstances. Some adaptations have been suggested where appropriate.

The lesson is designed to follow lesson two of the scheme of work: *Who was Alan Turing and why is he important to Britain?* Prior knowledge is not needed. However, the notion that students may arrive with knowledge, ideas and preconceptions is embraced and should be utilised to explore and resolve misconceptions.

The lesson plan provides one way to navigate the content and tasks. Teachers are encouraged to use and/or adapt the resources based on the needs, abilities and prior knowledge of their classes.

As far as possible, students should remain in the same small group throughout this course of lessons.

Resources

- Lesson plan
- Lesson PowerPoint
 - Including two embedded film clips in slide one
 - Including an embedded film clip in the hidden slide 6
- Timeline
 - To be printed, one per student, from slide 1, if following the alternate approach to the starter activity
- Legal and social changes sentences
 - To be cut up; one set per pair of students
- Legal and social changes fill in the blanks worksheet
 - To be printed one per student, or as deemed appropriate
- Set of 4 Information sheets
 - One set to be printed double-sided (sheets 1, 2 and 4 work best in colour)
- Set of 4 worksheets: Social and cultural attitudes
 - Four sets to be printed double-sided

Lesson Plan

Starter (10-12 minutes)

Show the timeline in the presentation and ask the class what they notice about the legal situation regarding same-sex relationships. They should notice that there is a gradual move towards equality. An alternative way to do this activity would be for each student to have their own copy of the timeline and be given a couple of minutes to discuss what they notice in their small group.

Then show the video 'History of LGBT rights in the UK: A long road to equality' (2m11s) This is a brief summary of the legal changes and will help to consolidate knowledge.

Ask the class if they can identify the major steps forward for LGBTQ+ rights (Wolfenden Report; Sexual Offences Act, 1967; Civil Partnership Act, 2004; Same Sex Marriage Act, 2013). They should be able to identify positive developments and the times when these occurred. Some may comment on the regression of Section 28 and its later repeal. Write these on the board as an aide memoire for the class.

Next, show the Channel 4 News report 'Gay rights: Britain's changing attitudes' (3m30s). Rather than simply being a recap of the legal changes, this report focuses on changing attitudes and challenges towards them.

Ask the class how attitudes changed (as opposed to the previous focus on legal changes). The role of protest and visibility should be highlighted. Again, write these on the board.

Ask for suggestions as to why these changes may have happened. Some students may refer to the cultural changes of the 1960s and/or a general sense of increasing public awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. Write these on the board as well. Point out that this is what they are going to look at in these two lessons.

Activity: the legal and social changes (10 minutes)

This is a straightforward activity, aimed at acquiring and consolidating knowledge (from the starter activity) and pointing the way forward to the remainder of this lesson and the next; it also reintroduces Alan Turing.

Prior to the lesson, cut up the 'Legal and social changes sentences' sheet – enough for one set of sentences per pair of students. Place the set of sentences in an envelope. Teachers can choose how to deliver this activity, depending on the ability of their students.

Option 1. Distribute the envelopes containing the 'Legal and social changes sentence to the students, who should work in pairs. Each pair should have one set of cards. Their task is to sort the sentences into the correct order, then copy this into their books or onto paper. Note that not all the sentences have a date given, so students will need to draw on previous work in some cases.

Option 2. Give each student a copy of the 'Legal and social changes fill in the blanks' worksheet. Their task is to write the correct word into the appropriate blank. A further option is to follow Option 1 but allow SEND students to follow Option 2.

Some of the sentences mention individuals or events the students may not have heard of, but they will still be able to complete the activity. Check for accuracy by showing the completed sentences in the lesson presentation (slide 5). This presents an opportunity to highlight changing social attitudes and possible reasons for them.

Activity: Research & Share (30 minutes)

The legal changes that the students have learnt about were, to no small degree, a product of social and cultural changes, exemplified in art, fashion and music, which in their turn, have influenced other areas of cultural life such as sport and film. This is a complex area of social history; therefore, teachers may want to provide extra information or explanation for why the examples used in the activity are important.

The purpose of the activity is to allow students to explore examples which helped drive changes in social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people, creating a context for the eventual rehabilitation of Alan Turing. Ideally, this is a Research & Share activity, although teachers should adapt it to the needs of their class. The worksheets allow students to record information succinctly and to demonstrate their understanding of that information, which they will then share with the other groups. In so doing, they will record key facts, think critically and reflect on historical and social changes.

Depending on the time available, the following introduction to this activity is advised, but as time may be short, the relevant slide (Slide 6) is hidden; the teacher will need to unhide it (right click on the slide and select 'Unhide') in order to show the clip. Show some or all of this film clip of David Bowie performing "Starman" on "Top of the Pops" on 6th July 1972. There are details about this performance and its impact on 'Information Sheet 2. Social and Cultural Attitudes (Music)'.

Ensure students understand that this was an iconic moment on television, which, fifty years later, was said to be the greatest BBC music performance of all time, with Alexis Petridis of The Guardian, referring to it as "the most famous three and a half minutes of music television in British history".

Showing the quotation from Robert Smith of The Cure will help to explain this point.

“I loved how odd it made me look, and the fact that it upset people. “You put on eyeliner and people started screaming at you. How strange, and how marvellous.”

It may be instructive to point out that such national television events are rarely, if ever, possible today, which has implications for the effectiveness of television as an agent of social change. However, this is conceptually difficult and will not be appropriate for all classes.

Next, divide the class into four groups (they do not need to be exactly the same size, but as far as possible based upon the groups they have been working for previous lesson in this scheme of work), give each group **one** of the Information Sheets and **one set** of the four worksheets.

Explain the activity: each group has an Information Sheet (one of Protest; Sport; Music; Life) and the relevant worksheet. They also have the worksheets corresponding to the other three Information Sheets. Their task is to complete their worksheet using the Information Sheet their group has. Allow 10 minutes for this.

After the 10 minutes is up, **one** delegate from each group takes their completed worksheet to each of the other three groups in turn and shares their information, which should be recorded on the appropriate blank worksheet. All the groups will end up with **four** completed worksheets.

The most complete worksheets can be displayed with the washing line timeline from lesson one.

Summary (10 minutes)

Summarise the main legal changes regarding homosexuality.

- Ask the class to give three or four examples of changes and make an overall judgement as to the direction of travel in the law each example is taking as it relates to same-sex relationships, i.e., positive and more equal or negative and less equal.
- Was the direction of travel always forward? They should be able to identify Section 28 as regressive. Some may mention the reporting of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s.

Summarise the major cultural changes and the subsequent attitudinal changes.

- Ask for a couple of examples of cultural moments, people or changes that highlight shifting attitudinal changes. Music, sport and protest will probably be the focus of

answers, but some students may mention art, fashion, theatre, television and so on. A good example from television of mainstream acceptance of LGBTQ+ would be the most recent iteration of Doctor Who, played by Ncuti Gatwa.

- Ensure that students explain why these examples have been chosen.
- Does any single event or change stand out as being particularly important?

Finally, ask how these changes affected how Alan Turing was treated and is remembered. Focus on the treatment of Turing in the early 1950s and the rehabilitation of his reputation and memory in the 2000s. In so doing, some students may point out that in the intervening decades, Turing was largely a forgotten figure in British history. This points the way forward to the second of these two lessons.