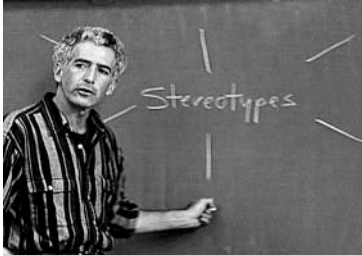


## **Lesson 7:**

# **STEREOTYPES ABOUT LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE**

### **Grades 4-5 And Grades 6-8**

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*In the film, a number of lesson plans helped students look at stereotypes as they broadly affect their lives, specifically in relation to lesbian and gay people. The fourth-grade class at Public School 87 in New York City, participated in a word association exercise to explore stereotypes about lesbian and gay people. The third-grade lesson from the Hawthorne Elementary Public School in Madison, Wisconsin, and the eighth-grade lesson from Burbank Public Middle School in San Francisco used word webs.*

*In all of these lessons it was apparent that teachers were building upon teaching tools and content that they had previously used in their classrooms. A fourth-grade teacher from Public School 87 referred back to a similar exercise that the class had done related to stereotypes about Native Americans. An eighth-grade teacher from Burbank Middle School started a lesson by discussing stereotypes that students experienced about ethnic groups, teens and others before moving on to stereotypes about lesbian and gay people.*

*In schools where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) people have not previously been discussed in the curriculum, it is helpful to use lessons that relate to material that has been taught, such as other units about discrimination and stereotypes. The following lesson plans combine elements from a number of the lessons highlighted in the film. The first lesson plan is designed for grades 4-5 and the second one for grades 6-8.*

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# STEREOTYPES ABOUT LGBT PEOPLE

## Grades 4-5

### Goals

- Students will increase their awareness of stereotypes about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
- To dispel students' stereotypes and misinformation about LGBT people.

### Objectives

- Students will be able to define the word stereotype.
- Students will be able to identify stereotypes about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
- Students will learn that LGBT people are represented among all races, genders, religions, socio-economic classes and professions.
- Students will learn that LGBT people have made important contributions within the United States and beyond.

### Time Required

One 45-minute session or two 30-minute sessions.

### Materials

Chart paper and markers

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People Cards (on page 94 in this guide) cut into individual cards. (Optional)

### Activity 1: Defining Stereotypes

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- Write the word *stereotype* on the board. Ask students what the word means. Record their answers on the board or easel paper.
- Write on the board the word "kindergartners" and ask students to brainstorm all of the stereotypes they have heard about kindergartners. (You can also substitute 'girls' or 'boys' for kindergartners.) Ask students:
  - » Do some kindergartners fit some of these stereotypes?
  - » Do all kindergartners fit all of these stereotypes?
  - » How do you think these stereotypes might make kindergartners feel?





- Make sure students recognize that:
  - » A stereotype makes people believe that everyone who is part of a certain group is the same in some way. For example, all teenagers cause trouble, or all girls can't do math, or all boys are not sensitive to other people's feelings.
  - » Stereotypes are hurtful. Sometimes they make us think we can't do things that maybe we actually can do. Sometimes they make us ignore what other people are capable of doing.

## Activity 2: Stereotypes about LGBT People

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- Form groups of four to five students each. Ask each group to brainstorm all the words they think about when they think about LGBT people. Have them write down their list on a piece of large paper.
- Ask each group to read aloud their list and record it on the board OR post the lists and read them aloud.
- Review the whole list. Ask:
  - » What do you notice about the words on this list?
  - » Where did you learn the things you brainstormed?
- Review the class definition of stereotypes.
- Review how stereotypes can be hurtful.
- Ask the group to identify why some things on the list are stereotypes.
- Discuss why these stereotypes are incorrect and hurtful to LGBT people and people with LGBT family members.
- Ask the students, "Looking back at our definition of stereotypes—is there anything you would add or subtract?"

## Activity 3: The Diversity of LGBT People

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Taking a look at the diversity among LGBT people is a natural follow-up to discussing stereotypes and where they come from. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are represented among all races, professions, etc. Some LGBT people fit some of the stereotypes and some do not. This activity helps students see the breadth of the LGBT community. Some of the famous people featured in this activity were also featured in the Hawthorne Elementary School Classroom unit on famous LGBT people.

- Form small groups of four to five students each.
- Pass to each group at least five LGBT people cards.  
There are enough cards so you can pick and choose the cards that best reflect the interests, age, and reading level of your students. Make sure that the cards given to each group are diverse in relation to gender, profession, race, ethnicity, etc. You do not need to use all of the cards.

- Ask the groups to read the cards aloud within their group.
- Once they have read the cards, ask the groups to discuss the following questions: (It may be helpful to have adults or older students monitor the small group discussions).
  - » Were you surprised to learn that this person is gay or lesbian? Why or why not?
  - » What about them made you think they were not gay or lesbian?
  - » What more did you learn about them besides that they were gay or lesbian? Did that also surprise you and why?
  - » How does this person challenge our stereotypes we put up on the board about gay and lesbian people?
  - » What does this teach us about stereotypes?
- At the end of the activity, ask each group to report back what they learned about stereotypes and LGBT people.



## TEACHING NOTES

### Extension Activity Media Analysis

Have students record references to LGBT people that they see on television or hear in music and discuss how the media perpetuates stereotypes.

- What other groups are stereotyped or ridiculed in pop culture?
- What have different groups done about it?
- What can young people do about it?

This extension activity can be used to generate deeper conversations about stereotypes and harmful language. Discussion questions might include:

- Why do you think certain language is used?
- How do you think the language makes people feel?
- Where do you find negative, positive or neutral portrayals of LGBT people?
- What do you think about the way that LGBT people are portrayed?

It can also be used in conjunction with writing assignments or math lessons. For example, students can be asked to draw graphs representing what kind of language is used where in the school or to use math skills to look at the frequency or percentage of positive, negative or neutral portrayals/referrals of LGBT people on television or in music.



## From The Film

"It should be mandatory, and I think that it's a healthy way of

teaching students to respect each other, understand each other. Academics are definitely important, but we also want them to develop, to reach an understanding so that they can resolve a crisis without becoming explosive. They need to understand it, so they can move on to learning." *—George Sloan, middle school principal in It's Elementary*

# STEREOTYPES ABOUT LGBT PEOPLE

## Grades 6-8

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### Goal

- Students will increase their understanding of stereotypes about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

### Objectives

- Students will increase their understanding of the impact of stereotypes.
- Students will be able to identify stereotypes about LGBT people.
- Students will learn that LGBT people are represented among all races, genders, religions, socio-economic classes and professions.
- Students will learn that LGBT people have made important contributions within the United States and beyond.

### Time Required

One to three 45-minute sessions depending on the format used.

### Materials

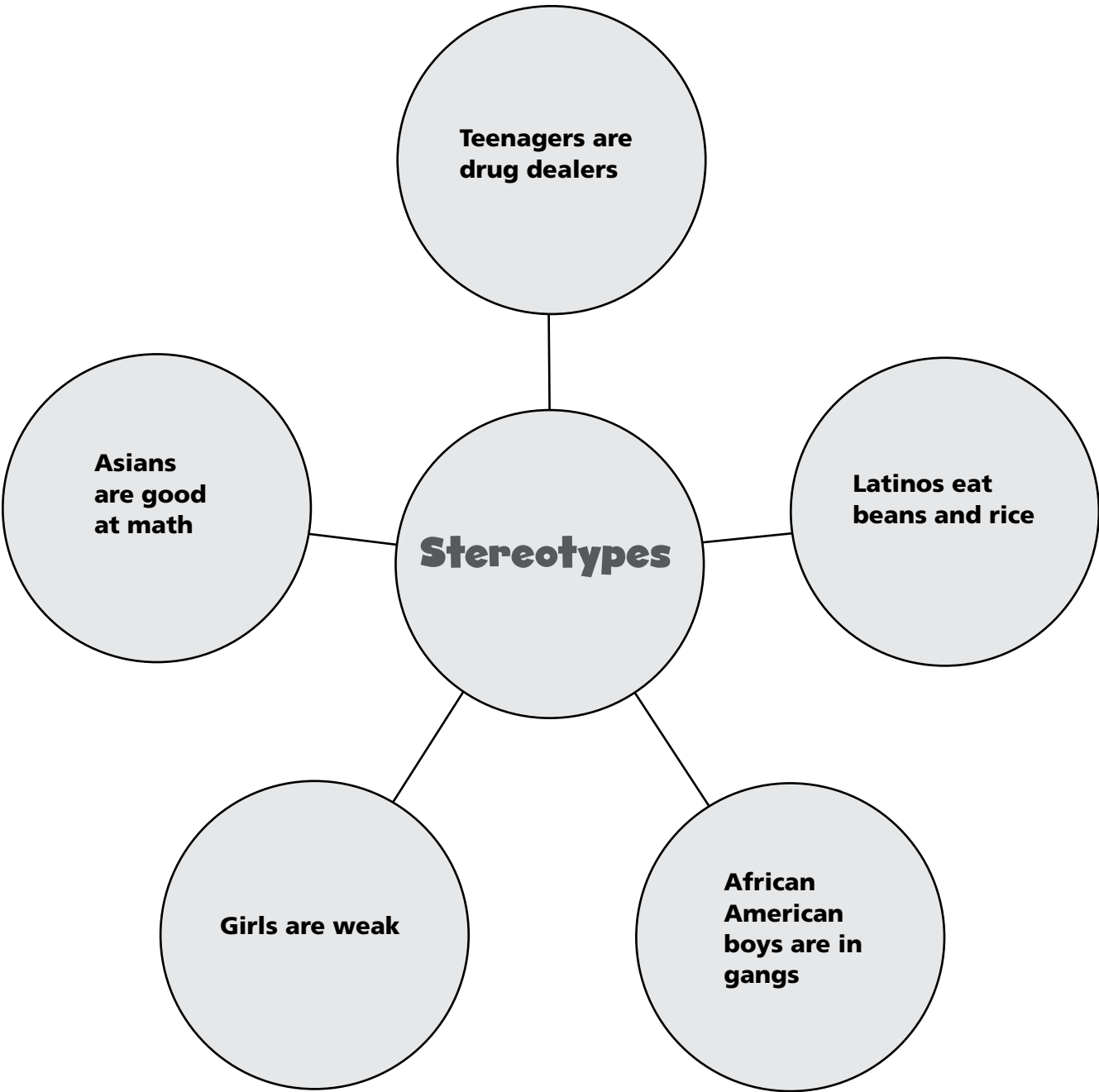
Chart paper and markers.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People Cards (on page 94) cut into individual cards.

### Activity 1: What's a Stereotype?

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- Draw a circle with the word *stereotypes* in the center.
- Ask students to give examples of stereotypes that they have heard or experienced about their own group or about others.
- Record the responses in a web, building from the word *stereotypes* in the center. For example you might have something that looks like the diagram on the following page.





- As you discuss these stereotypes with the students, draw out important facts about stereotypes. For example:
  - » A stereotype is something that may be true of some people within a group some of the time but is applied to a whole group.
  - » Stereotypes are hurtful.
  - » Stereotypes can make us think we cannot do things that we might be able to do and they can make us ignore what other people are capable of doing.
  - » Even stereotypes that seem positive or neutral on the surface (for example: Asians are good at math) can be hurtful, because they paint a whole group as being the same and they set up false expectations about an individual's interests and abilities.

### Activity 2: Reflection

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- Ask students to keep in mind what they have learned about stereotypes and then think about their own attitudes toward LGBT people. Tell them that you know that in your class there are people with a wide range of experiences and opinions regarding LGBT people. Some students may not be aware that they have ever spoken to a LGBT person, some may be LGBT themselves or be uncertain of their own sexual orientation, and some may have family members or friends who are LGBT. Reassure them that there are no right or wrong responses to the writing assignment that you are about to give them. Ask them to take about ten minutes to write at least one paragraph and hopefully two about:
  - » Their attitudes right at this moment about gay men and lesbians.
  - » What they would most like to learn about gay men and lesbians.
- If you have time, ask for a few volunteers to read their reflections out loud.

### Activity 3: More Information

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In the film, two young people from an organization called Community United Against Violence talk to the students at Burbank Middle School about their experiences as gay and lesbian youth. If you have access to this kind of organization with trained speakers you can proceed with this lesson plan by having the students hear from speakers. If you do not have such an organization in your area, you can use one of the following options as a way to help students counter stereotypes about LGBT people.

### LGBT People

- Form small groups of four to five students each. Provide each group with at least five cards from the list of famous LGBT people. Ask the groups to read the cards aloud within their group. Once they have read the cards ask the groups to discuss:

- » Which people were you most surprised to learn were LGBT?
  - » Which people have you heard of before? Of those people, which did you know were LGBT?
  - » In what ways do these people fit the stereotypes about LGBT people that we brainstormed? In what ways don't they fit these stereotypes?
  - » What does learning something about these people tell us about stereotypes?
  - » What does learning something about these people tell us about LGBT people?
- At the end of the activity, ask each group to report back what they learned about stereotypes and LGBT people.

### Activity 4: Further Reflection

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Ask students to write a paragraph or two either in class or as homework:

- Have there been changes in what you think about LGBT people?
- Have your views about any stereotypes changed?



#### TEACHING NOTES

#### Extension Activities

**History/Biography:** Have students conduct further research on a famous person that is described in the Famous People cards.

**Media Analysis:** Have students record references to LGBT people that they see on television or hear in music and discuss how the media perpetuates stereotypes.

- What other groups are stereotyped or ridiculed in pop culture?
- What have different groups done about it?
- What can young people do about it?

These extension activities can be used to generate deeper conversations about stereotypes and harmful language. Discussion questions might include:

- Why do you think certain language is used?
- How do you think the language makes people feel?
- Where do you find negative, positive or neutral portrayals of LGBT people?
- What do you think about the way that LGBT people are portrayed?



# Famous Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual And Transgender People Cards

All of the people listed here are LGBT



## Barney Frank

**1940-present:** An American politician and a member of the United States House of Representatives. As an openly gay male Democrat, he has represented Massachusetts's Fourth congressional district since 1981.

**It's Elementary**

## Lupe Valdez

**1947-present:** An American who on January 1, 2005, became the first woman and openly lesbian to be sworn in as Sheriff of Dallas County, Texas.

**It's Elementary**

## Rudy Galindo

**1969-present:** An openly gay male Mexican American figure skater who won the 1988 World Junior Championship and the U.S. senior championships in 1989 and 1990.

**It's Elementary**

## James Baldwin

**1924-1987:** African-American novelist, playwright and civil rights activist. Baldwin's work deals with issues related to being black and gay. He is best known for his novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953).

**It's Elementary**

## Barbara Jordan

**1936-1996:** An African-American politician from Texas who served as congresswoman in the United States House of Representatives from 1973 to 1979. Barbara lived for 25 years with her companion Nancy Earl.

**It's Elementary**

## Evelyn Mantilla

**1978-present:** Puerto Rican-American politician represents the Fourth district of the Connecticut House of Representatives. She is one of the few acting politicians who is openly bisexual and a person of color.

**It's Elementary**

## Sir Ian McKellen

**1939-present:** A gay English stage and screen actor and two-time Academy Award® nominee. He is best known for his roles as Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* and as Magneto in *X-Men*. He has been a vocal activist for LGBT rights.

**It's Elementary**

## Tammy Baldwin

**1962-present:** First American woman elected to Congress from the state of Wisconsin. She was also the first ever openly gay politician to be elected to the House of Representatives.

**It's Elementary**

## José Zuniga

**1970-present:** American Army veteran named the 1992 Soldier of the Year. Six weeks later he came out as a gay man. As a result of this he was no longer allowed to remain in the Army.

**It's Elementary**

## Elton John

**1947-present:** An English pop/rock singer, composer and pianist. Elton John, who is openly gay, wrote the music for the musical *The Lion King* and is one of the most successful musical artists of all time.

**It's Elementary**

## Lance Bass

**1979–present:** An American singer best known from the former pop group N\*Sync. He came out in 2006 in the front-page cover article for *People* magazine.

**It's Elementary**

## John Ameachi

**1970–present:** A retired Nigerian-English NBA basketball player who publicly announced his gay identity in February 2007. He is the first player associated with the NBA to come out.

**It's Elementary**

## Ellen DeGeneres

**1958–present:** An openly American lesbian actress, stand-up comedian, and currently the Emmy Award-winning host of the syndicated talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

**It's Elementary**

## Frida Kahlo

**1907–1954:** A bisexual Mexican painter who depicted the indigenous culture of her country in a style combining realism, symbolism and surrealism.

**It's Elementary**

## Sheryl Swoopes

**1971–present:** An African-American lesbian professional basketball player in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). As a three-time Olympic Gold Medalist and WNBA MVP, Swoopes is the most recognizable athlete to come out in a team sport.

**It's Elementary**

## Melissa Etheridge

**1961–present:** An American lesbian Academy Award-winning rock musician and singer. Etheridge won the Oscar® for Best Original Song, featured in Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*.

**It's Elementary**

## Christine Penner

**1957–present:** In 2007, this American *Los Angeles Times* sportswriter underwent sexual reassignment surgery, changing his name from Mike to Christine after 23 years of employment as a man.

**It's Elementary**

## Patria Jimenez

**1957–present:** A Mexican lesbian politician. In 1997 she became the first openly gay member of Mexico's legislature in the country's history—indeed, the first in any legislature in Latin America.

**It's Elementary**

## Christina Aguilera

**1980–present:** An openly bisexual American pop singer and songwriter. She came to prominence following her debut album *Christina Aguilera* (1999), which was a critical and commercial success.

**It's Elementary**

## George Takai

**1937–present:** A Japanese-American actor best known for his portrayal of Mr. Sulu in the acclaimed *Star Trek* television and film series. Takei is an openly gay advocate for LGBT rights.

**It's Elementary**

## Josephine Baker

**1906–1975:** An African-American lesbian entertainer most noted for her singing and contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in North America.

**It's Elementary**

## B.D. Wong

**1960–present:** An openly gay Asian-American actor. He is best known for his roles as Dr. George Huang on *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, as Dr. Henry Wu in *Jurassic Park* and Ngwang Jigme in *Seven Years in Tibet*.

**It's Elementary**

**Marlon Brando**

**1924-2004:** Bisexual two-time Academy Award®-winning American actor and star of *The Godfather*. He was named one of the greatest male stars of all time by the American Film Institute.

**It's Elementary****Billie Joe Armstrong**

**1972-present:** A self-identified bisexual American lead vocalist, main lyricist, and guitarist for the rock band Green Day.

**It's Elementary****Rosie O'Donnell**

**1962-present:** An American lesbian 11-time Emmy Award-winning American talk show host, comedienne and stage actress. O'Donnell and her partner are long-time supporters and activists for same-sex households and marriage rights.

**It's Elementary****Angelina Jolie**

**1975-present:** Bisexual American film actress and Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Refugee Agency. She has received three Golden Globe Awards, two Screen Actors Guild Awards and an Academy Award®.

**It's Elementary****Oscar Wilde**

**1854-1900:** A bisexual Irish playwright, novelist, poet, and short story writer. Known for his barbed wit, he was one of the most successful playwrights of late-Victorian London, and one of the greatest celebrities of his day.

**It's Elementary****Walt Whitman**

**1819-1892:** A gay American poet, essayist, journalist and humanist. Proclaimed the "greatest of all American poets" by many foreign observers a mere four years after his death.

**It's Elementary****Bayard Rustin**

**1912-1987:** A gay African-American civil rights activist and principal organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. He counseled Martin Luther King, Jr. on techniques of nonviolent resistance.

**It's Elementary****Magdalen Hsu-Li**

**1970-present:** A bisexual Chinese-American singer-songwriter, painter, speaker, poet and activist. She founded Chickpop Records.

**It's Elementary****Add Your Own****It's Elementary****Add Your Own****It's Elementary****Add Your Own****It's Elementary****Add Your Own****It's Elementary**