

Media Reviews

Secondary • Third Level - Senior Phase



Film Reviews for Secondary Schools

These film reviews are designed to help schools and teachers in Scotland incorporate films with LGBT themes into their teaching and learning. This resource is not intended as a prescriptive list, but to provide a guide for individual films that may be useful for LGBT Inclusive Education, and show how they can be effectively used in teaching and learning.



The films reviewed within this document were not done so in partnership with any producer or publisher. The films were reviewed by registered teachers in Scotland to support teachers and school staff, who are including films with LGBT themes in teaching and learning or in their school libraries, to consider the most effective educational media. The reviewed films included within this document are not endorsed or sponsored by Time for Inclusive Education and schools are encouraged to select media that best complements their own learning environment.

This resource is intended as a helpful starting point in highlighting some media that may be suitable in a learning context. It is recommended that schools, teachers, and librarians view any media before referencing them for learners.

In 2018, the Scottish Government committed to implementing LGBT Inclusive Education. Schools are expected to advance LGBT themes through their curriculum, with the objective of actively addressing prejudice and discrimination through an educational approach.

LGBT young people can face bullying and prejudice at school. Additionally, learners who are perceived to be LGBT by others, or have LGBT family members, can also experience this. Ensuring that all young people learn about, and have an understanding of, LGBT people, events, history, and themes can help to inspire mutual respect, understanding, and empathy.

This document provides detailed information on some LGBT-inclusive films that teachers may wish to use in their curriculum. This is not a complete list of all educational films with LGBT content, so schools and teachers should feel confident in finding media with LGBT stories, characters, and themes which meet their own needs, beyond those within this document.

Due to the nature of the curriculum in Secondary schools, most of the ideas in this document are intended to be relevant to a single subject or curriculum area. These will largely focus on areas where films are most likely to be used extensively, such as Languages, Social Studies, and Health and Wellbeing. However, there are many ways that films can be used between departments or for IDL, and schools are encouraged to consider this approach where it will be beneficial for their teaching and learning.



Some films about the lives, histories, and experiences of LGBT people include content relating to prejudice, discrimination, bullying, identity, and so on. It is important to recognise that this media can be impactful for learners trying to better understand or navigate issues they may be dealing with themselves. For this reason, teachers may wish to include information about how a learner can find support at school, as well as to signposting services (such as Childline or Switchboard) in a visible place or at the end of the lesson.

Using films with LGBT content in teaching and learning can help your school develop its LGBT-inclusive curriculum. For further support and a structured pathway to develop this work, schools can use the free Implementation and Evaluation Toolkit available here: lgbteducation.scot/toolkit/

Battle of Sexes (2017)

Directors: Valerie Faris, Jonathan Dayton

Running time: 2 hours 1 minute



"Emma Stone and Steve Carell bring their A-game to this crowd-pleaser based on the electrifying true story of the 1973 tennis match between women's champion Billie Jean King (Stone) and former men's champ Bobby Riggs (Carell). As fierce rivals on opposite sides of the court and the gender equality issue, Billie Jean and Bobby served up a cultural spectacle that resonated far beyond the sporting world. Filled with heart, humour and biting wit, Battle of the Sexes is a triumphant celebration of the historic contest that changed the game!" - Official blurb

Age range

S1 - S6 (Rated 12A)

Most Relevant Subject(s)

History, Modern Studies, PE

Use in your school or curriculum

Battle of the Sexes is an engaging film providing an educational exploration of relevant topics for those who are over the age of 12. The film portrays the life of tennis world number one Billie Jean King, a lifelong campaigner for gender and LGBT equality, at the height of her career in the early 1970s.

By showing her simultaneous struggles to fight for gender equality, come to terms with her sexual orientation and first relationship with another woman - all while trying to walk a fine line to preserve her own image (and with it, the image of the Women's Movement) - this film can provide a mirror for LGBT young people who also feel under pressure to be high achievers or to look and act a certain way, and help them to understand and be proud of who they are.

LGBT Learning Themes

- Understanding the Equality Act (2010), UNCRC and human rights
- Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- Recognising and challenging gender stereotypes
- Celebrating diversity and difference
- History of LGBT equality movements
- LGBT past and present figures and role models

Lesson ideas using this film

- History: "Battle of the Sexes" - Use our 'Battle of the Sexes' lesson on lgbteducation.scot to further explore the issues of women's rights and LGBT rights in late 20th Century America.
- PE - Mental, emotional, social and physical factors impacting performance - clips can be used from this film as an example of factors that impact the performance of a world number one athlete.
- Modern Studies - Clips can give context for discussion of gender equality, particularly the historical pay gap.

Review

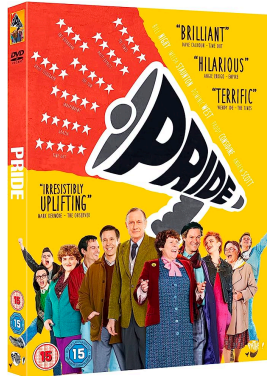
Battle of the Sexes is an excellent film based on the real story of tennis champion Billie Jean King. The film follows her struggle for pay equality in tennis, fighting discrimination faced by women in the game, culminating in her famous 'Battle of the Sexes' tennis match against self-described 'male chauvinist' Bobby Riggs. Against this backdrop, Billie Jean is also discovering her identity as a lesbian and what that means for her life and her career. Battle of the Sexes is an engaging film with a strong plot line that will entertain as much as it educates.

The film allows for the exploration of a variety of topics. While a full viewing of the film is best used in Social Studies, particularly History, to discuss the rights and treatment of women and LGBT people in mid-late 20th Century American society (see our '[Battle of the Sexes' lesson plan](#)), clips could be used in other subjects. One notable use would be examining some of the mental, emotional and social factors impacting the performance of a world champion in PE. Clips could also be used to give context to discussions of modern gender equality in Modern Studies or for general discussions of prejudice and discrimination in PSE.

Pride (2014)

Director: Matthew Warchus

Running time: 1 hour 59 minutes



"Based on an extraordinary true story, PRIDE tells how a group of London-based gay and lesbian activists raised money to support the families of miners during the strike of 1984. Identifying a mining village in Wales, they set off to make their donation in person, and in so doing inspired "the Best British film in years" (Glamour)." - Official blurb

Age range

S4 - S6 (Rated 15)

Most Relevant Subject(s)

History

Use in your school or curriculum

Pride is a suitable educational resource for learners over the age of 15. There are points in the film where strong language is used, including homophobic terms, and teachers should be conscious of this and confident to address it if necessary.

The film is based on the true historical story of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). During the Miners' Strikes of 1984/85, this group supported a mining village in south Wales through fundraising in their London LGBT community.

This film allows young people to see the benefits that came from different communities supporting each other in their shared struggles and the understanding which that fostered. It also provides an insight into the history of the time period, particularly the state of LGBT rights and discrimination in 1980s Britain.

LGBT Learning Themes

- Understanding the Equality Act (2010), UNCRC and human rights
- Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- Celebrating diversity and difference
- History of LGBT equality movements
- LGBT past and present figures and role models

Lesson ideas using this film

- History: "Pride" - Use our 'Pride' lesson on lgbteducation.scot to further explore the issues of workers' rights and LGBT rights in 1980s Britain.

Review

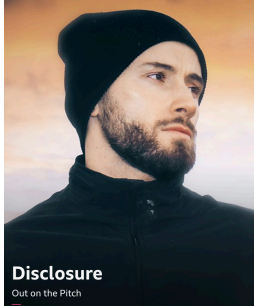
This film is based on the true story of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), who supported a Welsh mining village through the Miners' Strikes of 1984/85. LGSM formed in London on the basis that they saw miners and LGBT activists as having a common cause against the Government of the time, despite how different their two communities may be. Told through the eyes of a fictional main character, a young gay man, the film portrays many real figures and introduces viewers to the lives of both LGBT people and mining families during the mid 1980s. Learners have the opportunity to see the benefits of two communities working together to build understanding, empathy, and unite towards a common goal.

Learning could be expanded beyond the film into several different topics. Strikes, workers' rights and trade unionism in a rapidly deindustrialising Britain is a key topic of the film. There are opportunities for further learning about other areas of deindustrialisation in the later 20th Century, e.g. shipbuilding on the Clyde. Similarly, this film could serve to introduce further learning on LGBT issues in the 1980s, particularly the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is mentioned in the film but does not serve as a main theme. For learners studying this topic, Pride could serve as a bridge between wider rights campaigning and then specific campaigning around HIV/AIDS, or to look at LGBT rights into the 21st Century.

Disclosure: Out on the Pitch (2023)

Director: Craig Williams

Running time: 29 minutes



“Does men’s football have a problem with homophobia? It was only last year that Zander Murray became the first senior male footballer in Scotland to publicly come out as gay. While his decision has drawn praise from all corners of the game, it comes after years of struggling with his mental health as he kept his sexuality secret.

Zander explores what is being done to tackle homophobia in football and Disclosure follows him as he discovers how the sport can be made more inclusive.” - Official blurb

Age range

S1-S3

Most Relevant Subject(s)

Modern Studies, PSE, PE

Use in your school or curriculum

‘Out on the Pitch’ would be particularly good for young people who are fans of football, but can be useful for a variety of learners. The film portrays the story of Zander Murray, the first senior male footballer to publicly come out in Scotland as gay.

Zander can serve as a role model for LGBT young people who are sporty, particularly those who play football. By showing that there are both efforts being made within football as a whole, and that there are specific LGBT-friendly teams, it can help encourage LGBT young people not to give up on playing sports. For all young people, it helps to highlight the impact of prejudice in sport and the importance of being true to yourself.

LGBT Learning Themes

- Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- Recognising and challenging gender stereotypes
- Celebrating diversity and difference
- LGBT past and present figures and role models

Lesson ideas using this film

- Modern Studies: Using football as a lens to examine various kinds of discrimination, e.g. homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, racism, sectarianism, etc.
- PSE: Looking at homophobia, biphobia and transphobia through football and sport.
- PE: Using clips to discuss use of language on the pitch, good sportsmanship and team values.

Review

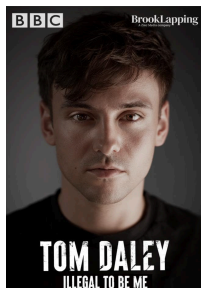
The documentary features Zander Murray, the first and (so far) only professional senior male footballer to come out in Scotland. It discusses his journey to coming out, the homophobic prejudice that footballers can face which make it difficult to come out in the men’s game, and the situation currently for LGBT players, referees and fans. Through this lens, the documentary is able to examine homophobic prejudice more broadly, the impact this has on LGBT people and their ability to play sports, and the effects on the mental health of those who do work in football, particularly when they are targeted for harassment on the pitch or on social media.

As it focuses on men’s football and is local to Scotland, this documentary may be particularly effective and relatable for boys in lower secondary school and others who are interested in football. It tackles homophobic prejudice and discrimination in a way that may be more accessible for this demographic of young person. As such it can be a great way to introduce the topic of homophobia in PSE, as an entry point to the topic that can support all young people to fully engage with the learning. However, the documentary is probably most suited to learning in Modern Studies, where football can serve as a focus for a variety of equalities issues including homophobia, racism and sectarianism.

Tom Daley: Illegal to Be Me (2022)

Director: Luke Korzun Martin

Running time: 59 minutes



"As thousands of athletes prepare to compete on the global stage at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Olympic gold medallist and double world champion diver Tom Daley wants to shine a light on an issue that he cares passionately about. Some competitors live in fear of horrific brutality inside the countries they represent. With punishments including whipping, life imprisonment and even death, it is illegal to be gay in over half of the 56 member states of the Commonwealth.

His journey takes him to some of the Commonwealth's most homophobic countries to ask what the sporting world can do to help. The film culminates with Tom taking a very public stand at this year's opening ceremony, in a powerful statement against homophobia.

Travelling from Pakistan, where homosexuality carries a maximum penalty of death by stoning, to Jamaica, where the punishment is ten years' imprisonment with hard labour, Tom talks to top male and female sportspeople facing persecution. He also discovers the colonial legacy that first criminalised homosexuality and the toxic influence of slavery on attitudes towards LGBT+ people." - Official blurb

Age range

S2-S6

Most Relevant Subject(s)

Modern Studies, Geography, PSE

Use in your school or curriculum

Due to the hard-hitting themes of this documentary (criminalisation, discrimination, physical abuse of LGBT people), our recommendation would be that this is not made accessible to learners out of a guided classroom context, such as a signpost in a school library or played for a school group. This documentary is best watched in a school setting where staff can support young people who may have questions, want to discuss the themes with an adult, or who need signposting to further support.

In a learning context, this documentary can be a helpful tool for exploring LGBT rights in a local and international context in Social Studies, and analysing the effectiveness of responses to inequality. We recommend that teachers make clear to young people where they can access support at school after viewing, such as pastoral care, if this is required.

LGBT Learning Themes

- Understanding the Equality Act (2010), UNCRC and human rights
- Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- Diverse families, including LGBT parents and siblings
- Celebrating diversity and difference
- History of LGBT equality movements
- LGBT past and present figures and role models

Lesson ideas using this book

- Modern Studies: Comparing the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Scotland and a contrasting society.
- Geography: Comparing the social differences between more and less economically-developed countries.
- PE - Mental, emotional, social and physical factors impacting performance - clips from this film can be used as an example of factors that impact the performance of athletes.

Review

This documentary is a great examination of international LGBT rights, with a focus on the countries of the British Commonwealth. Shot in the run up to the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Tom Daley looks at the impact and legacy of the British Empire in exporting homophobic laws around the world. In many countries these laws persist to this day.

Tom speaks to athletes from Pakistan, India, Singapore, Tonga, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad & Tobago. Pakistan and Jamaica are particularly highlighted, with Tom visiting both countries to speak to a range of LGBT activists both within and outwith sport. This film could be used in full or clips could be used to discuss LGBT rights across the Commonwealth, or to focus specifically on the countries of Pakistan, Jamaica or both.

This film provides insight into a range of themes, but particularly focuses on human rights, legal rights in various countries, and prejudice and discrimination. However, Tom Daley himself can serve as a good role model for his sporting achievements and campaigning. The film also discusses the prejudice that he faced when he came out, as well as showing him today as a successful athlete, presenter, husband and father.