



LOVE LETTERS

Level: 2nd year of the 1st cycle in secondary school

Duration: 1 period + homework

Goal: To develop the student’s awareness of similarities in the diversity of romantic life, and to develop the ability to express feelings in writing.

Summary: In this learning and evaluation situation, students will read love letters by well-known authors, some of which were written to individuals of the same sex. Students will write a love letter of their own and improve it after having analyzed the authors’ letters. Throughout this experience, students will be given the opportunity to reflect on the habitual invisibility of love between same-sex individuals.

LINKS TO THE PROGRAMME	
Broad Areas of Learning	Media Literacy
Educational Aim	To enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.
Focuses of Development	Understanding of media representations of reality. Use of media-related materials and communication codes.
COMPETENCIES	
Competency	Écrire des textes variés
Competency	Créer pour mettre à profit son imaginaire, ses sentiments, ses émotions et sa sensibilité esthétique
Competency	Lire et apprécier des textes variés

PRESENTATION OF THE LEARNING AND EVALUATION SITUATION

PERIOD	TIME	DEVELOPMENT	STUDENTS	TEACHER
1	5 min	Introduction to the project.		The teacher distributes the student and evaluation documents to the class and introduces the project.
	5 min	Discussion about love letters.	Individually, students answer questions 1 and 2 in their student document.	Pool answers. <i>Note that there are no correct or incorrect answers possible.</i>
	15 min	Writing the first draft of the love letter.	Individually, students write a first draft of their love letter.	Ensure that students write to someone important to them so that the letters can be as meaningful and real as possible.
	20 min	Reading the authors' love letters and filling out the accompanying table.	Individual reading, then students in pairs fill out the table in the student document.	Remind students that they are looking for two things: to identify the recipients and to find the ways in which love can be expressed in writing. (See teacher document.)
	15 min	Pooling answers.		After pooling answers on the recipients, ask the students what they have noticed about these recipients. Did they imagine that Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf were writing to a person of the same sex? Possible responses: <i>Feelings of love are similar, regardless of one's sexual orientation. We are so seldom made aware of feelings of love between homosexuals or bisexuals that we forget that they exist.</i> Give students more information on the different authors.
	15 min + home-work	Writing a second version of the love letter.	Individually, students write a second copy of their love letter and use the strategies they have learned to improve it.	Confirm that students have understood the evaluation grid .
At home		Writing a final version of the love letter.	Individually, either at home or in class, students write a final version of their love letter in the student document, taking care that the work is neat.	Correct the letters. Post them with the students' consent.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



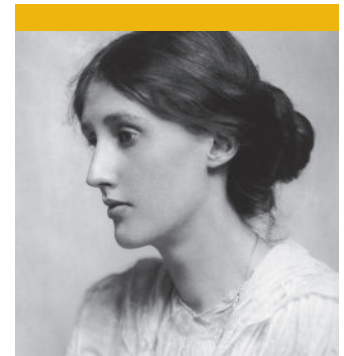
Amantine Aurore Lucile Dupin was better known by her pseudonym, **George Sand**. She was a very well-known literary and political figure in nineteenth century France. She adopted a masculine pseudonym in order to be considered more seriously. At times, she wore masculine clothes which gave her more freedom of movement. These same clothes permitted her to have access to areas which were not permitted to women such as theatre pits, libraries and courts. Her writings witness a fierce opposition to social conventions that were oppressive to women, and she was a staunch supporter of workers and the poor.



English writer **Oscar Wilde** was well known for his acerbic wit and cynicism. His comedies of manners became hits in theatres. At the height of his fame, he was accused of engaging in a homosexual relationship by the father of his lover. Wilde sued for defamation of character and after three court cases he was eventually condemned to two years of forced labour for being homosexual. He died shortly after his liberation.



Writer and intellectual **Victor Hugo** was one of the most famous figures in nineteenth century France. Leader of the romantic movement, he was a great supporter of the oppressed. His opposition to Napoleon III caused him to be exiled for 20 years, during which he wrote a series of major works. When he returned to France, he was drawn back into the political arena, first becoming a deputy and then a senator.



Virginia Woolf was a front-line modernist author who revolutionized literature by revealing the potential of fragmented chronology. A feminist, her writings defended the right of women to an education. She also believed that women had to have the financial means and time to develop intellectual activities. Bisexual, she married Leonard Woolf but had a long relationship with Vita Sackville-West.

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- 1 Portrait of George Sand by Auguste Charpentier (1838) coll. Musée de la Vie romantique, Paris. Public domain.
- 2 Portrait of Oscar Wilde by Alfred Ellis & Valerie (1892). Public domain.
- 3 Portrait of Victor Hugo as a young man. Public domain.
- 4 Portrait of Virginia Woolf by George Charles Beresford (1902). Public domain.