

## **“Brokeback Mountain” Lesson Plan**

by James Chamberlain,  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Surrey, B.C., Canada

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### **Film Synopsis:**

Ennis del Mar and Jack Twist, two ranch hands, come together when they're working as sheepherder and camp tender one summer on a range above the tree line. At first, sharing an isolated tent, the attraction is casual, inevitable but something deeper catches them that summer.

Both men work hard, marry, and have kids because that's what cowboys do. But over the course of many years and frequent separations this relationship becomes the most important thing in their lives, and they do anything they can to preserve it.

Brokeback Mountain is currently playing in theatres throughout North America and is an Oscar nominee for Best Picture of 2005. It won four Golden Globe awards and numerous other film honours. It is also available as a short story by Annie Proulx. ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-7132-5 and ISBN-10: 0-7432-7132-7 Paperback edition copyright 2005 Simon & Schuster Inc. US \$ 9.95 Canada \$13.95

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- To analyze how this movie reflects current day attitudes towards gay people.
- To understand how homophobia impacts people's daily lives.
- To encourage student's personal choices in making the world more accepting of LGBT people.

The acronym LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

**Target Audience:** Grades 10 to 12

**Film Rating:** 14A- Student under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Those over 14 need no accompaniment, only identification to verify their age.

### **Lesson Plan:**

Take your class to view the movie at a local theatre.

After viewing the film Brokeback Mountain with your class, have them discuss or respond in writing to the following questions.

- 1) Which character was your favourite in this movie and why?
- 2) What are the similarities and differences between this movie and a “typical” Hollywood love story?
- 3) Do you think this movie realistically depicts what a gay cowboy’s life would be like? Explain why or why not.
- 4) What factors influence homophobia in rural communities? How would they be similar to your school community?
- 5) To what degree has life changed for LGBT rural youth since 1963 when this movie was set?
- 6) What needs to change in society before Jack Twist’s dream of him and Ennis owning a ranch together would be a non-event in a rural community?
- 7) Has this movie had an impact upon your attitudes towards same-sex relationships in any way? Explain.
- 8) What can you personally do to make the world a safer and more accepting place for LGBT people?

**Extensions:**

Drama Departments may want to contact the author, Annie Proulx, regarding obtaining performance rights to perform the play in your local high school.

Use the book as a novel study or “read aloud” in class to initiate discussion about the questions above.

Have students write response journals which help them to explore or examine their attitudes and beliefs about LGBT people within society.

For more information on LGBT issues in schools log onto [www.galebc.org](http://www.galebc.org) (Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia)