

## Virginia Studies SOL *Modifications & Additions*

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### Skills + Corresponding Curricula

VS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by

a) analyzing and interpreting artifacts and primary and secondary sources to understand events in Virginia history;

-----(*VA v. Loving documents, George Washington & Marquis de Lafayette letters*)

d) recognizing points of view and historical perspectives;

-----(*Native American Boarding schools, Two-Spirit*)

e) comparing and contrasting ideas and cultural perspectives in Virginia history;

-----(*Two-Spirit*)

f) determining relationships with multiple causes or effects in Virginia history;

-----(*VA v. Loving*)

h) using a decision-making model to identify costs and benefits of a specific choice made;

-----(*VA v. Loving, Deborah Sampson*)

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### Virginia: The Physical Geography and Native Peoples (addition)

*VS.4.5 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the diverse aspects of Native American Culture that set them apart from white colonists and the ramifications some of those differences caused for the Native Americans.*

a. **Rationale:**

- i. Two-Spirit individuals were some of the most revered members of certain Native American tribes. To leave out historical information on Two-Spirits from the curriculum essentially overlooks a cornerstone of Native American culture. Native Americans have commonly been erased throughout history due to their differences from English colonizers, and it is important to not only bring to life the queer aspects of Native American culture that break the norm but to emphasize the importance of preserving it as it has so often come under attack. Some direct results of differences culturally such as Two-Spirit individuals include Indian Boarding Schools. Indian Boarding Schools would force kids to go or there would be consequences against their family and would strip them of all their beliefs and they would return not knowing who they ever were which caused

mental health issues for many. Boarding school staff would also cut their hair which, in the native culture is a symbol of pride. History has continued to repeat itself, white, heterosexual, and wealthy people continue to mistreat groups that they think goes against them or is slightly different from them. This is important information to relay to students because it is a real example of historical reactions by white Americans as a direct result of the differences between groups, and the discrimination against queer individuals such as Two-Spirits that they saw as “unnatural”. Seeing first-hand accounts by Native Americans who were sent to these boarding schools will give students empathy and an in-depth understanding of the struggles of marginalized groups.

**b. Possible examples and activities:**

- i. Talk about LGBTQ+ and how many Native Americans want to include Two-spirit as part of the acronym and play a video breaking down the acronym to introduce it to students.
- ii. An activity to include in conjunction with the lesson would be one of the first-person accounts from Native Americans who were sent to Indian Boarding Schools, such as the one provided below, in order to humanize the history and encourage students to make real-world connections.

1. <https://www.pbs.org/video/unspoken-americas-native-american-boarding-schools-oobt1r/>

**c. Criticism:**

- i. A likely criticism against teaching about Two-Spirit individuals is that it goes against Christianity, however, the separation of church and state bars religious beliefs from influencing curriculum in the public school system. Thus, this argument is invalid within the constructs of a public school curriculum. Furthermore, there might be arguments against teaching about Indian Boarding Schools to 4th graders, but this is also around the time students tackle other upsetting topics such as slavery and the Holocaust. These issues are best taught in a safe and structured environment to ensure students understand what Native Americans have gone through historically and to build empathy and cultural awareness.

1. Set Ground Rules & Guiding Questions for Students

- a. Emphasize the serious nature of the content to the students and set expectations for respectful behavior and verbiage.
- b. Ask your student’s empathy-driven questions such as:
  - i. Why do you think these schools were created?
  - ii. How would you feel if you or a loved one were sent away to an Indian Boarding school?

d. **Citations:**

- i. Chevat, R., & Bronski, M. (2019). *A queer history of the United States for young people*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- ii. Two-Spirit: Health Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/>
- iii. Fewster, P. (n.d.). Two-Spirit Community. Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <https://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/two-spirit.php>
- iv. Native Americans, Gender Roles, and Two-Spirit People " Teaching LGBTQ History. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/native-americans-gender-roles-and-two-spirit-people/>

**VS.5 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the role of Virginia in the American Revolution by:**

*b) identifying the various roles of American Indians, whites, enslaved African Americans, and free African Americans in the Revolutionary War era, including George Washington,*

a. **Rationale:**

Important historical figures such as Washington and Lafayette are a great way to introduce and facilitate productive discussions about relationships among students and also debunk the idea that having close same-sex friends makes you “gay” while still ensuring Standards of Learning are being met. This is a typical misconception around this age as they start using the word “gay” as a hurtful word. Because Washington is such a revered figure in American history, discussing his potential role in queer history is crucial for LGBTQ+ students as it is empowering to see representation and similarities between themselves and such accomplished individuals. While a criticism to adding this topic is that Washington may not have been queer, it is important to discuss the possibility by analyzing primary source documents and also emphasizing that if he was a part of the queer community that this is not a bad thing. Additionally, some educators may stray away from this aspect of Washington's past because he is viewed as an “American hero” and we do not want to paint him in a negative light, but we need to be as transparent about our history as possible. This allows for better understanding and if students are learning about someone of such importance then these relationships will start to be normalized and not viewed in such a negative connotation. At this age, students look anywhere for possible role models or someone they can relate to and by including this information, George Washington instantly becomes more relatable and important to younger generations. Moreover, one of the primary sources backing up the possible relationship between Washington and Lafayette are the letters they sent back and forth to each

other. These letters could easily be broken down, sentence by sentence, for the students so they could dissect the language of that time period. Not only would they be learning about the relationship but they would also gain useful skills such as learning how to break down things they do not understand, and using context clues to further understand a reading. This would additionally improve student understanding of the role the French played in the American Revolutions through this personal relationship.

**b. Possible examples and activities:**

- i. It would be beneficial to break down the letters sent back and forth between Washington and Lafayette to get students acclimated to reading and interpreting primary source documents. This would be done sentence by sentence to help the students fully understand the communications. This will allow them to learn how to use basic context clues, and it will expose them to different styles of writing from different time periods throughout history.

**c. Criticism:**

- i. George Washington's story about his relationship with Lafayette is more of an assumption based off their letters which is why many historians do not label this relationship as more than a same-sex friendship. Meaning, they are not certain as to what extent their relationship truly was. This could confuse students and take away from Washington more important contributions. It could take away from his title of an "American hero", so educators may not address this part of his past because they are worried it may ruin his reputation.

**d. Citations:**

- i. Chevat, R., & Bronski, M. (2019). *A queer history of the United States for young people*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- ii. Founders Online: From George Washington to Lafayette, 10 May 1786. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2020, from Deborah Sampson- VS. 5 (*modification*)

*c) identifying the various roles and measures women took on in order to participate in the American Revolution*

**a. Rationale:**

Debrah Sampson enlisted herself into the Army during the American Revolution disguised as a man, but when people found out about her identity she was asked to leave. Sampson was granted praise for her service but was not granted her pension immediately after departure. After writing a book about her life and giving lectures, she finally received the attention she needed to finally be

granted her pension. The story of Sampson is an important one because it is a story of someone pushing the boundaries of societal norms and not caring what others thought. Sampson was a cross-dresser who did anything she could to be successful and although during that time the term queer would have not been used, today we may label Sampson as that. We may have given Sampson the label of queer because she did not fit the typical “norm”; instead, she was resilient and pushed back against what was expected which is one of the main characteristics of the queer community. Additionally, many historical figures taught about are typically not women soldiers, so including the story of Sampson not only touches on the inclusion of women but also touches on the inclusion of the queer community. Although some may say her story is irrelevant to the American Revolution, Sampson's story is one that inspires others and sheds light on gender norms. A large number of these norms still exist today, so by providing this example, students are able to compare and then reflect on how they have changed or stayed the same.

**b. Possible examples and activities:**

- i. Class discussion about her life and the barriers she faced. Ask the students their opinion on why Sampson may have engaged in the act of cross-dressing.
  1. Guiding Questions to help students generate thoughts and ideas on norms and identity.
    - a. Why do you think Sampson decided to cross-dress?
    - b. What do you believe gender norms are?
      - i. The teacher could write these examples on the board to help with understanding/ or have the students write them down to help with engagement

**c. Criticism:**

- i. A possible criticism could include that educators do not see the relevance of her story to Virginia history because she is from Massachusetts despite her connections with George Washington and the American revolution.

**d. Citations:**

- i. Chevat, R., & Bronski, M. (2019). *A queer history of the United States for young people*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- ii. Michals, E. (n.d.). Deborah Sampson. Retrieved October 20, 2020, from [https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/deborah-sampson?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8rT8BRcbARIsALWiOvQBg4\\_fgu7OkRopsh1hTMGCghK6dDdv3FRGZflOYKJso0nBxy1RLAaAm7LEALw\\_wcBhtps://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-04-02-0051](https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/deborah-sampson?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8rT8BRcbARIsALWiOvQBg4_fgu7OkRopsh1hTMGCghK6dDdv3FRGZflOYKJso0nBxy1RLAaAm7LEALw_wcBhtps://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-04-02-0051)

## **Civil War and Postwar Eras**

*VS.8 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the reconstruction of Virginia following the Civil War by*

*b) identifying the effects of segregation and “Jim Crow” on life in Virginia for American Indians, whites, and African Americans; and*

### **a. Rationale:**

Although Jim Crow Laws are continued to be covered throughout public school curriculum teaching, the aspect of “Jane Crow Laws” is never mentioned. Jane Crow Laws tap into the concept of intersectionality focusing primarily on how black women face higher levels of oppression. This is an important topic to address because it leads to the introduction of intersectionality. By allowing students to start learning through an intersectional lens, the rest of their education is changed to be more inclusive. This also allows them to start thinking critically from a young age. It is important that they know the true extent to these laws and how it has affected all types of people and not just African Americans broadly. We need to allow them to think more deeply from a young age so they are prepared for further discussions down the road in their education. By bringing up this topic, it introduces them to a concept of continued oppression and that certain people face more intersectional oppression. For the queer community, this has been something they continue to face, so providing an example of how this is a trend in history will help with the general understanding of how our society functions. This topic may receive some criticism from educators for it being inappropriate for 4th graders, and that the concept is not necessary because Jim Crow Laws are covered in the curriculum. However, we need younger students to be aware of the full extent of these laws because if we continue to leave out important aspects of history, then we are painting a false public memory. In addition, this is what we are doing with the queer community and we cannot continue to normalize erasing certain groups from our history.

### **b. Possible examples and activities:**

- i. Introduce the term intersectionality by doing a Venn diagram activity as a class and then individually. Then, use a historical figure and break down their intersectional oppressions to further explain how intersectionality works.
- ii. Use a video to further explain intersectionality if the class needs additional clarification.
- iii. An activity that gets them up and moving may help explain this topic because it is so complex.

### **c. Criticism:**

- i. Possible criticisms would be that this content is inappropriate for the age level and not important or necessary to help explain this part of history. There may be a consensus that Jim Crow laws address everything that needs to be addressed regarding this topic.
- d. **Citations:**
- i. Chevat, R., & Bronski, M. (2019). *A queer history of the United States for young people*. Boston: Beacon Press.
  - ii. Pauli Murray: Fighting Jane and Jim Crow. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/pauli-murray-fighting-jane-and-jim-crow>
  - iii. S. (2017). Pauli Murray: Civil Rights and Women's Trailblazer. Retrieved October 20, 2020, from <https://k12database.unc.edu/files/2018/01/PauliMurray.pdf>

**VS.10 The student will demonstrate an understanding of Virginia government, geography, and economics by**

a) identifying the three branches of Virginia government and the function of each; *Using Loving v. Virginia as an example to apply the three branches to and facilitate a discussion of the impact of those decisions.*

**a. Rationale:**

Since students already are required to learn the different branches of government, it is beneficial to provide opportunities for practical application of the knowledge through a monumental Virginia court case that majorly changed the course of history and the lives of queer people. This is a perfect way to meet preexisting Standards of Learning while also encouraging critical thinking skills and introducing an important part of queer history to students. The inclusion of Loving v. Virginia enhances standards that already need to be met, and will ultimately increase content retention because the real-world example of an important Virginia court case will show students the different branches of government in action and allow them to apply what they already know. Not only that, but it also introduces the idea of the barriers that homosexual individuals faced historically and still today. This encourages students to use empathy and consider how queer individuals were impacted by these laws and consider how important decisions regarding a case like Loving v. Virginia were in terms of lasting impact.

**b. What to include/ Possible examples and activities:**

- i. It would be beneficial to include a hands-on activity to learn about the branches of government by applying them to the different aspects of

Loving v. Virginia as a class in order to encourage critical thinking skills and it assess student knowledge in a low-stakes way while also introducing the events leading up to and following the major decisions made.

- ii. Teachers could also facilitate a discussion in which students discuss how the world might be different if Loving v. Virginia had a different outcome and what that would mean for queer individuals. This would encourage critical thinking skills and also allow educators to take note of student comprehension of the ideas taught in the lecture.

c. **Criticism:**

- i. A possible criticism of including Loving v. Virginia in the curriculum is that it is too early to start looking at specific controversial court cases and that it would be better to focus on just the branches of government; however, it is better to allow students to synthesize the new information about the branches of government through the application, analysis, and discussion.

d. **Citations:**

- i. Dugnan, B. (n.d.). Loving v. Virginia. Retrieved October 19, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Loving-v-Virginia>
- ii. U.S. Reports: Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967). (n.d.). Retrieved October 19, 2020, from <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep388001/>