Lesson Plan: How Did One, Inc. v. Olesen Expand Freedom of Speech?

Inquiry Question: How did One, Inc. v. Olesen expand freedom of speech?

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HSS Standards 11.9 and 12.10
HSS Framework, 11th Grade, P. 411; 12th Grade, p. 454
History Social Science Content Standards

11.9 Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II.

12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

History Social Science Framework

Chapter 16, Page 411

A systematic investigation, interrogation, and firing of thousands of suspected gay men and lesbians from federal government positions extended into surveillance and persecution of suspected lesbians and gay men in state and local government, education, and private industry. Students can debate whether such actions served national security and public interests and consider how the Lavender Scare shaped attitudes and policies related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from the 1950s to the present.

Chapter 17, Page 454

Topics for discussion may include…discrimination against members of the LGBT community.

CCSS Standards

Reading, Grades 6-12
RH 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
RH 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
RH 7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem.
RH 9: Integrate information from diverse information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS Standards:

Writing, Grades 6-12
WH1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying, the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
WH4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. 9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS Standards:

Speaking and Listening, Grades 6-12
SL1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in-groups, and teacher-led with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts and issues, building on others ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Overview of Lesson

- Students will learn how One, Inc. v. Olesen expanded freedom of speech for the LGBTQ community.
- Students will experience strategies that will help them analyze primary sources.
- Students will examine and use literacy strategies that will help them access primary sources.
- Students will engage in close reading and text-based discussions in various settings including in pairs/groups and as a classroom.
- Students will generate at least one writing task that is Common Core based.

Teacher and Student Resources

- Teacher Slides for this Lesson.
- Poem: Part 1; Part 2
- Video: How Florida legally terrorized gay students https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbTBehjDlc0
- Advertisement, “Foreign Books and Magazines that Will Interest You.”
- ‘Sappho Remembered’ ‘Lord Samuel and Lord Montagu’
  An advertisement for The Circle
    o https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/Archive/ONE-magazine-2-8--1954-10--2A3BF1O3HBMOH?Flat=1#/SearchResult&VBID=2A3BXZ9RNBT9&PN=1&WS=SearchResults
- How 1950s LGBTQ Found Hope and Community in a Pioneering L.A. Magazine
- One, Inc. v. Olesen Decision

Vocabulary

- Johns Committee
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)
- Executive Order 10450
- Lavender Scare.
- Mattachine Society
- One Magazine
- Comstock Laws
- Cruising
- Roth v. United States

Procedures

1. The teacher will show the following video: *How Florida legally terrorized gay students*. After the video students will participate in a Stand-Up Hand Up-Pair Up. Students will stand up, put heir hands up, and quickly find a partner across the room and discuss the following question: How did the Johns Committee terrorize LGBTQ persons?

2. The teacher will present the following information about how LGBTQ persons were viewed and treated in the 1950's by placing this information in a series of slides and doing a Short Lecture.

**Slide Script:**

**Slide 4**
*The dominant perception of homosexuality in the 1950s was that it was a disease.*

*In 1952 the American Psychiatric Association published the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders for the first time. It included homosexuality as a mental disease.*

*Most employers and government agencies barred homosexuals with morality clauses and they were widely considered to be security risks. In daily language they were often defined as "deviants", "perverts", or "inverts" and "pedophiles."

**Slide 5**
*President Dwight Eisenhower's Executive Order 10450 barred gay and lesbian Americans from being employed by the federal government.*

*With the excuse that a federal employee could be blackmailed because of their sexuality, the federal government targeted gays and lesbians in what became known as the Lavender Scare.*

*This fear that gay men and lesbians could be blackmailed into revealing state secrets resulted in a systematic campaign to identify and remove all government employees suspected of homosexuality.*

Lesson: *How did One, Inc. v. Olesen expand Freedom of Speech?* p. 3
In Los Angeles, the LAPD went after the gay community with a vice squad, which used a large number of undercover officers who posed as gay men for purposes of entrapment.

Once caught in these stings most gay men did not go to court if they could avoid it. Defending the charges in these stings would have nearly always led to loss of employment, and potentially other scandals.

The most common outcome was to make a plea bargain for a lesser charge in the hopes of paying a fine. In this manner, the vice squad harassment became a recurring shakedown of the gay community, and it continued until well after the 1950s.

Many of those who were convicted of crimes became registered sex offenders. Many lost their jobs or otherwise had their lives ruined. Such was the price of being a gay man in the 1950s.

The teacher will provide background information about the Mattachine Society and the One Magazine. Students will read the following article: How 1950s LGBTQ Found Hope and Community in a Pioneering L.A. Magazine. The students will engage in a reading strategy called Say Something. Students will choose a partner and read silently and simultaneously to designated stopping points. They will choose the stopping points before they begin reading. When each partner is ready, they will stop and “say something.” The something might be a question, a brief summary, a key point, an interesting idea or a personal connection. The process will continue until the article is fully read. Once the activity is over, the teacher will engage students in a Whole Class Discussion on the following question: How did the One magazine support the LGBTQ community?

The teacher in a Short Lecture will review the Comstock laws and explain how the federal government used them to crackdown on the One magazine.

**Slide Script:**

**Slide 9**

*The Comstock laws were named after their chief proponent, US Postal Inspector and anti-vice activist Anthony Comstock. Comstock received a commission from the Postmaster General to serve as a special agent for the U.S. Post Office Department.*

*A section of this Act criminalized any use of the U.S. Postal Service to send any of the following items: obscenity, contraceptives, abortifacients, sex toys, personal letters with any sexual content or information, or any information regarding the above items.*
ONE, Inc. founded by the Mattachine Society, published the magazine ONE: The Homosexual Magazine beginning in 1953.

After a campaign of harassment from the U.S. Post Office Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Los Angeles Postmaster Otto Olesen declared the October 1954 issue "obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy" and therefore unmailable under the Comstock laws.

In that issue, the Post Office objected to "Sappho Remembered", a short story "Lord Samuel and Lord Montagu", a poem and an advertisement for The Circle, a magazine containing homosexual pulp romance stories.

Slide 11

5. The teacher will read "Sappho Remembered" with the class and ask the students to discuss the following question in a Think-Pair-Share: What might people in your community find objectionable in ‘Sappho Remembered?’ The teacher will then place students in pairs. One student will analyze the poem "Lord Samuel and Lord Montagu" and the other student will analyze an advertisement for The Circle. Students will look for content that might be considered objectionable to a 1950’s audience. Specifically for any content that might be considered to be ‘obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy.’ Once the task is complete students discuss what they think a 1950’s audience would consider “obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy” about the ad and the poem. After students have shared in pairs, the teacher will have students share their findings. The teacher will have a Whole Class Discussion with students regarding the following question: What contents in the One magazine would a typical person in the 1950’s consider ‘obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy?’ In that issue, the Post Office objected to ‘Sappho Remembered’, a story of a lesbian who falls in love with a young woman who leaves her boyfriend to live with her because it was "lustfully stimulating to the average homosexual reader"; ‘Lord Samuel and Lord Montagu’, a poem about homosexual cruising that was said to contain "filthy words"; and an advertisement for The Circle, a magazine containing homosexual romance stories, that was said to direct the reader to other obscene material.

6. Students will participate in a Quick Write on the following question: What role did homophobia play in how the contents of the One magazine were viewed? Quick Writes involve students writing rapidly and without stopping in response to a prompt or open-ended question. Students will write for 5 minutes. They will hang their quick writes all over the room. Students will then participate in a Gallery Walk. Students
will read other students’ quick writes. The teacher will give each student a post-it, prior to the beginning of the Gallery Walk, so they can comment on another student’s quick write. Students can make a comment or ask a question on the post-it. When they are ready they can attach the post-it on another students’ quick write. At the end of the gallery walk, students will retrieve their papers and read other people’s thoughts on their responses. The teacher can have a few students share out.

7. The teacher will have students look at the decision in One, Inc. v. Olesen and ask the following question: What do you notice about the resolution of the case?

Slide 17
The decision, citing its June 24, 1957, landmark decision in Roth v. United States 354 U.S. 476 (1957), read in its entirety:
Eric Julber for petitioner.
Solicitor General Rankin, Acting Assistant Attorney General Leonard and Samuel D. Slade for respondent.
PER CURIAM.

The petition for writ of certiorari is granted and the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit is reversed. Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476.

8. The teacher will explain Roth v. United States.

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Roth operated a book-selling business in New York and was convicted of mailing obscene circulars and an obscene book in violation of a federal obscenity statute.

Slide 19
In a 6-to-3, the Court held that obscenity was not "within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press." The Court noted that the First Amendment was not intended to protect every utterance or form of expression, such as materials that were "utterly without redeeming social importance."

The Court held that the test to determine obscenity was "whether to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest." The Court held that such a definition of obscenity gave sufficient fair warning and satisfied the demands of Due Process.

9. The teacher will have students write a structured response to the following question: How did One, Inc. v. Olesen expand freedom of speech? In their response students will explain what One, Inc. v. Olesen was about and also how the case expanded freedom of speech.

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10. Students will have a **Whole Class Discussion** on the inquiry question of the lesson: *How did One, Inc. v. Olesen expand freedom of speech?* The teacher will end class with the slide below.

*Slide 22*

One, Inc. v. Olesen was the first U.S. Supreme Court ruling to deal with homosexuality and the first to address free speech rights with respect to homosexuality.

In its next issue, ONE told its readers: "For the first time in American publishing history, a decision binding on every court now stands. ... affirming in effect that it is in no way proper to describe a love affair between two homosexuals as constituting obscenity."
SAPPHO REMEMBERED

Jane Dahr

On the way from the airport to their hotel they had no chance to talk for Joe Rich, the manager of the antoinette room where Pavia was opening that night, was giving her all the information he'd given Jill, her secretary, at least four times already. Joe Rich was obviously the itchy type.

"And Miss Ort," he said ridding himself of yet another hangnail with his small bright teeth, 'your secretary and I decided to let your accompanist do a whole number by himself tonight before you sing. Then, when he's half way through the second number, you start singing softly out beyond the spot and just sort of wander into it. Ignore the audience, sort of, you know."

Beneath her mink coat, folded over her knees, Pavia pressed her knee conspiratorily against Jill's. The routine was as old as the ballad singer, but an effective opening for any disease with her poise, and Jill knew Pavia was delighted to have it accepted without a row. She said in that silkiy, famous voice of hers, "That's a very shrewd idea. Yours. Mr. Rich?"

"Well, I suppose," he admitted modestly. "If it's done right, it sort of catches 'em napping, you know. And wear that slinky silver and white job your secretary showed me yesterday — Gad! you've got a figure!" His eyes appraised the firm lines beneath her beige jersey dress with a buyer's gleam. "She says it's a Faith original — I'll see the word gets around where it'll do the most good — and it fits you like the hide on an earthworm."

He leaned ahead of himself and rushed on, "And keep that pianist of yours out of trouble. This town's hot as a rivet since they picked up the mayor's kid queenning a drag ball. We're sold out for the next three weeks and we can't afford any bad publicity. Didja notice I had three photographers at the airport? Not bad for a town this size!" But before they could reply, "Oh, here's the hotel. Want me to come up awhile, I can."

"No, thank you, Mr. Rich. I really need to relax." Pavia cleared her throat and Rich jumped with fright.

"Something wrong with your throat? I know a specialist — "

"Everything's fine, Mr. Rich. I'll see you this evening."

"Nine o'clock! Don't forget! Don't be late! Remember, nine o'clock!"
As they entered the lobby, where Pavia instinctively took Jill's elbow to assist her at the few marble steps, she said, "Poor darling, have you had to put up with that for three days?"

"That and more! Pavia, don't be surprised if he drops dead before your first number. He's a dynamo, but too big for what he's supplying."

"Everything all right, if you'll excuse a foolish question?"

"Perfect. And how did Dr. Kaegel impress you?"

"Jill, that man's a marvel. He has facts that will make Kinsey's look like copy book exercises. But everyone's afraid of him, so I promised --"

"Oh, darling! How much this time?"

"I said five thousand, but if you —" Pavia trailed off sheepishly.

"Pavia, five thousand! You're so generous, and even though you're —"

Pavia closed the door of their suite behind them, tossed her coat on a chair and gently drew the girl to her.

"Forgiven?" she asked at last. She touched the delicate pulse beat beneath the light golden hair on the child-like temple. "Will there ever be a day when you won't blush when I do that," she murmured.

"I hope not," Jill sighed. "It's so good to have you back."

"Sweet," Pavia touched her earring. "Coral flowers on little shell ears. Coral suits your coloring. Jill, pearl, ivory, coral, gold. But aren't those the ones we saw in the shop in New York?"

Jill nodded. "I showed them to Jerry and he bought them. I couldn't resist taking them even though they're far too dear. They had a necklace too, each little flower was a perfection of carving and it was all worked into several strands of tiny seed pearls. But it was sold. She sounded heartbroken. She was such a child, Pavia thought with annoyance.

"Never mind, you're pretty enough without it. Any mail?"

"Pavia, you don't mind my taking presents from Jerry occasionally?"

"Of course not. You're free to do as you please — until you decide. You know that." Pavia's rich voice had grown ominously flat as she took off her hat and fluffed her short dark hair in the mirror. "Any mail?"

Jill picked up a stack of letters and two unopened notes that had been delivered by hand. "Do you know a Mrs. Leah Brake," Jill asked.

"Why yes, she's —" Pavia stopped short, feeling herself flush.

"— the girl who had you expelled from college," Jill finished for her. "The one I remind you of so much. The notes are from her. She has called three times, wanting you have cocktails and dinner with her tonight — just the two of you — out at her home. She said she's a widow now."

"I know," Pavia put the mail down unexamined. "I think I'll shower."

"Pavia, Jerry's calling from New York tonight for a definite answer."

"Have you made up your mind?"

"I think so."

"When will you know?"

"I don't quite know. It's rather up to you, isn't it?"

Pavia took a cigarette from her bag and lighted it. "Nothing is up to me. That decision is yours. I've explained why." She started out. "Call Mrs. Brake and tell her to pick me up here at five."

"I... I've found a girl here in town who can take my place," Jill said quietly. "She's a good secretary, a wonderful girl. I knew her sister."

"I'll interview her tomorrow." And Pavia left the room.
Lesson: How did One, Inc. v. Olesen expand Freedom of Speech? p. 10
She dressed in the new gown that Jill had put out for the show, and as she caught up her long ermine wrap and shimmering bag, she called to Jill, who was staring out of the tall windows at the snow falling over the lake, "Will I see you before the show? I'm not coming back here."
"I suppose so," Jill replied, not turning, "but if you don't—"
"If you want, you may wait here for your call."
"Thank you, Mrs. Brake's chauffeur is waiting in the lobby."
"Good night."
"Good night."

How could she, Pavia reproached herself as she stared at the back of the chauffeur's sleek, well groomed head. She was numb with misery and yet she had done nothing to alleviate the pain. She had practically pushed the girl out of her life, even before she knew what her decision was to be. But Jill was so dependent; she had to learn to think more for herself. And hadn't Jill said she'd found another secretary? Of course, that had been after she'd told her to call Leah. Still, she had been searching for a substitute.

Pavia massaged her throat which suddenly had begun to ache with suppressed emotion. The chauffeur was staring at her in the mirror again. Now that they'd left the downtown traffic, he had divided his attention almost equally between her and the road, yet his eyes held neither admiration nor curiosity for the famous. It was plain hatred. Did he know about her, Pavia wondered. If he did, how did he know? Did Leah send for other women now that she was a widow? She picked up the small microphone at her elbow and said, "Will you keep your eyes on the road, please?" His face and neck turned scarlet, but he did not look at her the rest of the drive.

She wondered again about Leah. Was it possible for the personality of such a woman to change? Vividly she remembered their sorority room at the university, the faces of their House Mother and the Dean of Women as the door had burst open upon them, that nightmare of an inquisition in the office downstairs with Leah hysterically screaming accusations at her, her parents' faces as they had come to take her home. Ten years ago, and yet the agony could still bleed freely. Was it possible she still loved Leah? She had thought she wanted never to see her again, yet here she was on her way to answer the first summons the woman had sent her. But how much had Jill to do with her going—and Jill's young man.

Jill was so helplessly young, only twenty and actually nearer sixteen in many essential ways of maturity. She'd known this Jerry all her life; they'd been in love in a way, until she'd come to work for Pavia. Pavia had met the fellow several times, a nice young man, good job, good prospects, he would give Jill a good life with healthy babies and her share of bliss and mediocrity. Could I do more, Pavia thought with a sharp ache in her heart.

Then she remembered what Dr. Kaegel had said to her in New York: "We, as individuals, are not important; but as a part of some scheme of Nature we have yet to understand, we're terribly important. As individuals it doesn't matter if we're big or little, wise or foolish, so long as, together, we generate enough energy, or enlightenment, to reveal the darkened stage upon which Nature has set us. We have to find the main switch before we are all lost or dead! That is how we are important to mankind!"

He was right. It must not matter what the Jills did. There were always the Leahs to provide the essentials, Pavia told herself fiercely.
But she was wrong. She knew it the moment she walked into the beautiful drawing room, cold and correct like its mistress. Leah had not changed. As one slow minute dragged forth a fresh one, Pavia saw the old faults grow bigger, the few virtues nearly dead. Pavia’s mind could not leave her hotel suite, where the girl she loved above all else was waiting for a fatal call.

And Leah, receiving no encouragement, nor even interest, became more aggressive, and after dinner in the middle of a plea for forgiveness and understanding, with tears, and “can’t we try just once more, darling,” the sleek young chauffeur had strolled in, out of uniform, his collar open, as if he had owned the house! The situation was as ludicrously clear as Leah’s face. Pavia could hardly keep from laughing aloud. Of course, the man had apologized, thinking, “Madame was alone,” which only made matters worse for Leah. After that, even a fool would have understood that Leah didn’t care where her pleasures came from — so long as the supply was tremendous, varied and unending. Pavia went back to town in a cab, leaving Leah’s paramour to justify his deliberate intrusion in ways best known to them alone. She hoped they would be very happy, as she laughed in spite of her misery.

But the episode had helped to restore enough perspective to get her through her first performance at the Antonette Room. She had told Joe Rich, “I’ll just do three numbers,” and afterward, “I don’t think I should do a second show the first night — bad psychology to crowd them on an opening,” and miraculously, he had agreed with her. She escaped to her suite where she expected to find her secretary at least ecstatic, and probably packed.

To Pavia’s surprise, there was a candlelit table laid for two overlooking the city, the lake and the night. Jill, who had been weeping, was dressed in the gown Pavia liked best. But she barely spoke as Pavia took off her wrap.

“Well, Pavia tried to sound cheerful, “is this for Auld Lang Syne.”

“It is an occasion,” Jill said, biting her lip and not looking at her. Then she burst forth, “I can’t leave you, Pavia. Jerry called just a few minutes ago. My answer was no. He... he was even drunk!”

“But why no? He has a right to get drunk once in a while, surely?”

“It wasn’t that! Drunk or sober, I don’t love him... like I do you!” She started to cry. “Mrs. Brake may be more important to you than I am — but she won’t go with you everywhere as I will, and you do need me... in spite of what you may think... as I need you!”

Pavia felt the fatigue within her melt from her mind down through her muscles. She felt like a girl again herself, living in the imagery of Millay and Dickinson. But she knew Jill too well. She must not give in too quickly to her for the girl had to be taught to be stronger and more self-reliant somehow, and Pavia knew how she must teach her. It would be difficult, but it would be heaven.

“Jill, dear,” she said quietly, “I’ve a surprise for you — two of them, in fact, before we have a long, long talk. First, Mrs. Brake is sleeping with her chauffeur, and I’m glad she is. Second, if you found a jeweler’s box when you unpacked for me, it’s for you. You see, I remembered what day it is too,” she nodded to the roses and candlelight. “Why don’t you get the box?”

“Pavia! It can’t be the —” Jill ran from the room.

“But it is, dear,” Pavia said softly as the girl brought the box back and opened it. “Every flower a perfection of the carver’s art, all worked into several strands of tiny pearls.” Something out of the same gentle sea from which Aphrodite arose, and over which Sappho gazed as she wrote her lyrics. It might have been my going away gift, but thank God, it isn’t. Come, my mouse, let me help you put it on.”
In good Victoria's glorious days
When Sammy was a child
Were things perverse a great deal worse?
Is Wildeblood worse than Wilde?

This new Elizabathan age
The ancient pattern fits —
When Roister Doister held the stage
And boys were Honest Kit's.

Gomorrha, Pompeii, Corinith, Tyre,
Rome, London — all a piece —
It seems the fat's been in the fire
Ere Athens was in Greece.

While Priestley tell the B.B.C.
About the "invert clique"
Why should this Second Samuel flee
The bleating of the sheep?

Had he beheld — this Statesman Eld' —
The vice of other reigns,
Would he thus the "Lily" gold
Or throw him to the flames?

Would he idly waste his breath
In sniffing round the drains
Had he known "King Elizabeth"
Or roistering "Queen James"?

MORAL
They say the sins of Sodom
In these Isles have come to roost —
So if your flying east from GANDER
Watch you don't get fairly "goosed".

And if you wish to Pick a Dilly
When you're strolling out at night,
Just make sure it's not a "Lily"
Or a male transvestite.

For there's blackmail in the woodpile
And there's blackmail by the fence,
But to black male and to white male
It's: AVOID THE PUBLIC "GENTS"!
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355 U.S. Per Curiam.

ONE, INCORPORATED; v. OLESEN, POSTMASTER OF LOS ANGELES.

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT.


241 F. 2d 772, reversed.

Eric Julber for petitioner.

Solicitor General Rankin, Acting Assistant Attorney General Leonard and Samuel D. Slade for respondent.

Per Curiam.

The petition for writ of certiorari is granted and the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit is reversed. Roth v. United States, 354 U. S. 476.