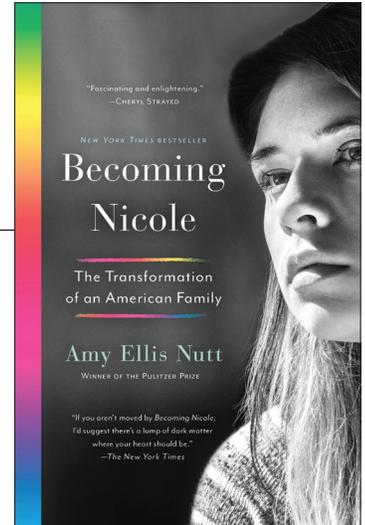




Becoming Nicole

The Transformation of an American Family

by Amy Ellis Nutt



A *New York Times* Bestseller • A *New York Times* Notable Book • Named one of the Ten Best Books of the Year by *People* and one of the Best Books of the Year by *Men's Journal* • A Stonewall Honor Book in Nonfiction • Finalist for the Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Nonfiction

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Reading Level: 10

"Generously traces the parameters of parental love . . . delving deep into the case of a single family with a transgender child and discovering in its particulars certain universal truths about the ways children arrive in one's life already themselves." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"A profoundly moving true story about one remarkable family's evolution." —*People*

about the book

When Wayne and Kelly Maines adopted identical twin boys, they thought their lives were complete. But by the time Jonas and Wyatt were toddlers, confusion over Wyatt's insistence that he was female began to tear the family apart. In the years that followed, the Maineses came to question their long-held views on gender and identity, to accept and embrace Wyatt's transition to Nicole, and to undergo a wrenching transformation of their own, the effects of which would reverberate through their entire community. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Amy Ellis Nutt spent almost four years reporting this story and tells it with unflinching honesty, intimacy, and empathy. In her hands, *Becoming Nicole* is more than an account of a courageous girl and her extraordinary family. It's a powerful portrait of a slowly but surely changing nation, and one that will inspire all of us to see the world with a little more humanity and understanding.

about the author

AMY ELLIS NUTT won the Pulitzer Prize in 2011 for her feature series "The Wreck of the Lady Mary," about the 2009 sinking of a fishing boat off the New Jersey coast. She is a health and science writer at *The Washington Post*, the author of *Shadows Bright as Glass*, and the co-author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Teenage Brain*. She was a Nieman Fellow in Journalism at Harvard University, a Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton, and an instructor of journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. She lives in Washington, D.C.

note to the teacher

The “T” in LGBTQ stands for transgender, but the term has only recently gained clout as public figures have come out, scientific research into gender identity has advanced, and the interpretation of anti-discrimination laws has been debated in the courts.

We know that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) students are affected disproportionately by bullying and harassment at school, and that transgender high school students are particularly at risk. More and more states are passing laws to protect the rights of transgender students to use the bathroom and locker room facilities that match their gender identity and to participate on the gender-appropriate teams in sports and groups in school activities. Many schools have adopted anti-discrimination policies in response to these laws.

In the breakthrough 2014 case *Doe v. Clenchy*, the Supreme Court of Maine ruled that denying a transgender student the right to use the school bathroom that matched her gender identity was a violation of her rights. Nicole Maines and her family were the plaintiffs in the case, and the landmark decision has helped propel transgender rights into public consciousness. Their story is much more than this one accomplishment. *Becoming Nicole* is a coming of age story for one girl and a coming-to-terms story for her family members, who learn to open their hearts and embrace change.

Becoming Nicole is a work of journalistic nonfiction that can help students unpack themes of bullying and outsidership from a new perspective and in a relatable context. The story of Nicole Maines and her family is also a wonderful tool for teaching empathy. In many ways, Nicole is a typical kid who just wants what every kid wants: to be herself and to fit in. Her story comes at an opportune time. Your students are likely aware of transgender public figures like Olympic gold medal-winner Caitlyn Jenner (formerly Bruce Jenner) and Jazz Jennings from the TV series *I Am Jazz*, and they probably already have questions and confusion about the subject. Additionally, with an estimated 1.4 million transgender adults and many more transgender adolescents in the United States, if your students have not yet met an openly transgender peer, they probably will soon.

standards

Appropriate for grades 11 and 12, *Becoming Nicole* supports the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts, including strands for history/social studies and science. The text lends itself to interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. It can be used by subject teachers to bring literature into U.S. history, government, civics, biology, and psychology classes. The book is also a great resource for school counselors and an excellent addition to the health curriculum, as it supports the National Sexual Education Standards and National Health Education Standards.

about this teacher’s guide

This guide provides discussion questions and suggested activities for the ELA teacher as well as science, social studies, and health teachers. You may want to use questions and activities from other sections of the guide to enrich your class discussions or create an interdisciplinary study.

A note about pronouns: In the story, Wyatt’s transition to Nicole is gradual. Amy Ellis Nutt refers to Wyatt using male pronouns until he changes his name to Nicole in chapter 19, so I will do the same in this guide.

before teaching

terminology

The terminology used to refer to LGBTQ individuals is quickly evolving, and it is important to familiarize yourself with the appropriate terms so that you are comfortable discussing the book

with your students. There is a glossary on page 275 of the book, and you may also want to look at the following websites:

Human Rights Campaign Glossary of Terms
www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms

GLSEN Key Concepts and Terms
[www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN Terms and Concepts Thematic.pdf](http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN_Terms_and_Concepts_Thematic.pdf)

creating a safe space

Gender identity may be a difficult topic for some students to talk about, but dialogue is a vital component of any learning environment. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has a guide to creating a safe space to promote dialogue, inclusion, and respect when discussing sensitive subjects. It includes ideas about how to facilitate discussion, foster trust, and deal with student discomfort and bias. See www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/establishing-a-safe-learning.html for the complete guide.

You may want to establish “ground rules” for class discussions, such as *Respect Others*, *Speak from the “I,”* *Ask Questions*, *Respect Confidentiality*, and *Share “Air Time.”* For the ADL’s full lesson plan, see: www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/establishing-ground-rules.pdf

other resources for creating a safe space:

Discussing Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Identity and Issues
www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/discussing-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-identity-and-issues.pdf

Strategies to Create Safe Havens for Students
www.genderspectrum.org/blog/asca-safehavens

Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment
www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment

question jar

Before beginning the story, have your students write down any questions they have about the topic and place them in a jar. You can address the questions anonymously as you work through the book. Leave the jar out so that students can add new questions as they come up.

— discussion & activity guide for the ELA teacher

— opening activity

Have your class do a Four Corners debate in response to the statement “Every individual is either male or female.” Students will stand in different corners of the room to show their position on the statement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and then justify and discuss their positions. Give students the opportunity to change their position during the activity and to debrief through journaling at the end. For the complete activity, see www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/four-corners.

i. prologue & beginnings

The first section of the book introduces the Maines family and follows the lives of Jonas and Wyatt from their biological mother's pregnancy to the end of elementary school. We see Wyatt gradually transition from a toddler who likes to wear pink sequin tutus to a rising fifth grader who identifies as a girl and uses female pronouns. Kelly Maines recognizes and accepts that Wyatt is transgender from an early age, while Wayne avoids dealing with his feelings about his son's feminine inclinations. Wyatt's twin brother, Jonas, supports Wyatt's gender identity and often feels responsible for protecting him. Section I focuses on the Maines's family dynamics as well as Wyatt's experiences at school and his personal struggles.

discussion questions

1. What is the purpose of the prologue? What mood does it convey?
2. What does it mean to be an outsider? Have you ever felt like one? Share a brief story.
3. Before Wyatt was born, "Wayne imagined all the things he'd be doing with his first male child—playing catch, shooting baskets, firing deer rifles" (12). Later, Wayne refers to Wyatt's friend Leah as his girlfriend (30). What assumptions do adults make about gender and sexual identity in babies and children? What influence do you think this has on the children as they grow up? In general, how do gender stereotypes play into a parent-child relationship?
4. Wayne worries about what strangers think of Wyatt (32). How does it feel to be judged by others? How can the reactions of strangers welcome or ostracize those who are different? What power do we have to affect those around us?
5. If you were Wyatt's parent, how would you respond to Wyatt's appearance in a pink dress at the "Get to Know the Maineses" party (37-38)?
6. Jennifer Boylan's appearance on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* was for Kelly "the kind of affirmation she needed when she questioned whether what she was doing for Wyatt was right" (47). How important is positive visibility for the transgender community? What impact do celebrities like Jazz Jennings, Caitlyn Jenner, and Nicole Maines have on the popular perception of transgender individuals? Do you think this has an influence on politics?
7. When Kelly first hears the term *transgender*, she avoids using it because she doesn't want to label or pigeonhole Wyatt. But on Wyatt's seventh birthday, Kelly finally embraces the term and allows herself to buy him the toys he really wants (48-49). Do labels limit people or liberate them? Do we need gender labels?
8. Analyze the excerpt from Garrison Keillor's "Cat, You Better Come Home" (53). Why do you think Nutt includes the excerpt in the story?
9. At the school Christmas concert, Wayne presents Wyatt with a bouquet of roses. Nutt writes, "A transition had begun and no one even seemed to notice" (78). What does she mean by this?
10. Did Wyatt's teacher do the right thing by making Wyatt redo his self-portrait (69-70, 74)? What were her reasons for censoring Wyatt's work? Based on Nutt's discussion of self-perception (74-75), do you think that Wyatt followed the directions for the assignment?

ii. the sexual brain

The second section of the book begins with three chapters that explore the history, beliefs, medical practices, and scientific understandings that surround gender and sexual identity. The rest of the section follows the Maines family on its journey as Wyatt transitions into Nicole from the beginning of fifth grade to the end of high school.

discussion questions

1. Define and differentiate the terms agender, bigender, pangender, genderqueer, and androgyne using at least three different sources. Which terms can be found in a dictionary and why are some terms missing from reference materials? (See www.merriam-webster.com/help/faq-real-words for further discussion.)

2. Kelly and Wayne make an assumption about the judge at the county courthouse based on his appearance (117). In what ways does a person's appearance affect our expectations of what a person is like? Does this impact the way in which we treat the person?
3. After reading chapter 20, think about who is responsible for protecting vulnerable students at school. What roles do school administrators, teachers, parents, law enforcement, and other students play? What influence can bystanders have on a bully?
4. After reading chapter 25, think about this question again. How do the following people respond to Jacob Melanson's harassment of Nicole? Evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.
 - Nicole's family
 - Mrs. Molloy, the teacher
 - Bob Lucy, the acting principal
 - Kelly Clenchy, the school administrator
 - Lisa Erhardt, the school counselor
 - Sharon Brady, the special services director
 - Robert Sinclair, the assistant principal
 - The Orono police department
5. Read the excerpt from Orono Middle School's handbook for incoming students (148). Is the "eyes-on" policy in line with the school's mission? What message does the "eyes-on" policy send?

iii. gender matters

Section III begins with a chapter about the scientific underpinnings of being transgender, and Nutt explores the idea of gender as a spectrum rather than discrete categories. This section digs deep into bullying, violence, and civil rights as the Maines family is forced to move out of Orono for Nicole's safety and go stealth in their new community in Portland. The family emerges from "the closet" as a force for change and wins a Supreme Court case against the Orono school district.

discussion questions

1. Nutt writes that "the binary view of male/female and the pathologizing of anything that doesn't conform to these expectations is stubbornly entrenched" (162). We have seen how the binary view of gender shuns transgender people like Nicole. But what repercussions might it have on cisgender people? Does the binary view limit the interests and opportunities of all people?
2. What leads Nicole to go stealth in chapter 28? Think about the many events and experiences that contribute to the family's decision. Do you think it is Nicole's best option?
3. What message does King Middle School send when Nicole's teacher gives Nicole permission to call in sick during the bullying discussion (188)? Do you agree with the school's actions? Can a school's bullying culture be changed if potential victims are asked to stay home?
4. Contrast the culture at King Middle School, where students know that they will be labeled if they open up to others (184) with the culture at Waynelete, where Nicole is openly transgender (208). To which is the culture at your school more similar? What can be done to improve your school culture?

iv. breaking barriers & epilogue

The last two chapters and epilogue describe legal and cultural changes happening in our country surrounding transgender issues as well as intimate emotional and physical changes happening to Nicole as she undergoes gender confirmation surgery at age eighteen. We see Nicole and the world around her transform.

discussion questions

1. Wayne's acceptance of his transgender daughter comes in large and small moments throughout the story. Which do you think is the most pivotal moment for Wayne?
2. Nutt ends the story with a conversation between two third graders (261-262). How effective is the ending?

3. What do you think is a central theme of the story? Give details from the text to support your answer.
4. *Becoming Nicole* is a series of triumphs, heartbreaks, and accomplishments. Which part(s) of the story did you find the most interesting, moving, or important?
5. What is the narrative structure of the book, and what impact does it have on the reader? (Chapter 12 is a good one to discuss).
6. Why does Nicole's story matter to students who are not transgender?

— suggested activities

1. **Journaling:** Write a journal entry in response to the question: What makes you who you are? How do you perceive yourself?
2. **Create a School Policy:** Does your school's athletics department have a policy for transgender students who wish to participate in sports? If not, what should the policy be? If so, can it be improved? Create your own policy for transgender athletes at your school. (This works well as a small group activity.)
3. **Group Work:** Break the class into small groups and have each group agree on and list the ten most masculine and ten most feminine behaviors or traits. Have groups compare notes in a whole-class discussion. Is there overlap or grey area? Where?
4. **Write a Letter:** Write a response to Nicole's letter to the universe (154-155). You can respond to the whole letter or to specific parts.
5. **Poetry:** Analyze Nicole's poem, "Disequality" (245-246). Write your own poem about a part of your life or identity.
6. **Silent Conversation:** Lead a Silent Conversation using one of the student questions from the question jar. For the complete activity, see www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-silent-conversation.
7. **Art:** Imagine a world in which people are not separated by gender in sports or at social events, all restrooms are gender neutral, and you never see a checkbox for *male* or *female* on forms. What would a "gender-neutral" world look like? Think about how Nicole's life would be different if she had grown up in a world that places less emphasis on gender. Make a comic or drawing, or write a colorful description of such a world.
8. **Music:** Write a song about an issue from the story and perform it for the class. (This works well as a small group activity.)
9. **Video & Discussion:** Watch Nicole Maines's TEDx Talk, *Transgender: You're Part of the Story*, at tiny.cc/nicoleTED. Nicole says, "You have the power to make a difference in someone's life. . . . If you are on this earth, you are part of the trans story." What can we do to foster inclusion and support *all* people in our community?

— closing activity

Repeat the Four Corners opening activity and see if any students take a different position this time. Discuss how the experience of participating in the activity is different now than it was before the class read the story.

— correlates to common core standards

reading: informational text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

speaking & listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

language

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4.c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5.b Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

social studies connection

key topics/themes

- civil rights
- separate but equal
- school policies and the law
- history of anti-discrimination laws
- influence of the media on culture

discussion questions

1. The lawsuit filed by the Maines family resulted in a Supreme Court ruling that protected the right of transgender students to use the restroom of their gender identity. (You can read the decision

at www.courts.maine.gov/opinions_orders/supreme/lawcourt/2014/14me11do.pdf.) What other Supreme Court cases have influenced the rights of students at school?

2. Give an informed response to the New York law blogger's clown suit comment (77). Clarify the blogger's confusion between sexual anatomy and gender. How is gender identity related to gender expression? Do you think that transgender people should dress to match their sexual anatomy at work in order to protect themselves from discrimination?
3. Why was the Supreme Court's ruling against the Orono public school district such a monumental decision for the Maines (chapter 40)? What will change now? Think about how laws directly and indirectly affect the policies and culture of institutions.
4. Consider the question at the heart of the lawsuit: "Was forcing someone such as Nicole to use a separate, staff-only restroom constitutional? In other words, was it 'separate' but 'equal'?" (170). What can be learned from the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, and how does it inform Nicole's case?
5. We have seen how anti-discrimination laws affect the well-being of transgender individuals at school and at work. In chapter 41, we learn that health insurance policies also play a role. What other laws and policies might affect a transgender person's quality of life?
6. On July 26, 2017, President Donald Trump tweeted that "the United States Government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military." Do you think that such a ban would be constitutional? Compare and contrast the possible ban with the former *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* policy (chapter 33).
7. Read the Obama administration's *Dear Colleague* letter to public schools from May 2016 (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201605-title-ix-transgender.pdf). Less than a year later, the Trump administration rescinded the letter, eliminating special protections for transgender students. What impact do you think this will have on students in U.S. high schools?

• suggested activities

1. Op-Ed: How does the law respond to bullying at school in your state? Does your state have laws that specifically protect the rights of transgender students from bullying and discrimination? (See www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html and www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/transgender-people-and-law.) Write an Op-Ed to raise awareness in your community about this issue. See "Writing an Op-Ed" at www.advocatesforyouth.org/topics-issues/organizational-development/246?task=view.
2. Current Events Presentation: Nutt relays a positive story about the owner of a Planet Fitness franchise protecting a transgender member from discrimination (166). Find a recent positive story in the news about a transgender individual or group. Summarize the story and share it with the class.
3. World Cultures Research: Discuss the ways in which different cultures have embraced the idea of multiple genders (163-164). Then explore the PBS.org Map of Gender Diverse Cultures (www.pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits_map-htm). Have each student choose one of the cultures from the map and do research to learn more about that culture's understanding of gender and the roles of individuals with different gender identities in society. Be sure to have students cite evidence to support their ideas. You may want them to write a paper or give a presentation on their findings.

• correlates to common core standards

history/social studies

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

science connection

key topics/themes

- nature vs. nurture
- sexual anatomy vs. gender identity
- gender spectrum
- gender transition
- biology of sex and gender (genetics/epigenetics, brain regions, physiology medicine)
- sexual variation in nature
- cultural differences in gender categorization

discussion questions

1. To Wayne, "There was no question Jonas was pure boy, and his very existence seemed to put the lie to Wyatt's insistence he was female" (38). How can identical twins be so different? Cite scientific evidence.
2. What does Dr. Spack mean when he says that gender is malleable (105)?
3. Summarize and discuss the "physiological evidence for being transgender" (159).
4. Sex reassignment surgery is risky, expensive, and does not come with a guarantee that it will make a person happy. If scientists were to discover a way to change a transgender person's mind to match his/her body rather than change the body to match the mind, would that be preferable? Would it be ethical?
5. Nutt provides different kinds of scientific evidence in her discussions about gender identity, including case studies, genetic studies, postmortem brain studies, animal studies, and others. Why does Nutt include each type of study and how does it contribute to our understanding of gender? How effective is the data Nutt presents?
6. Dr. John Money of Johns Hopkins University believed that if intersex individuals were assigned a gender at birth, they would naturally adopt that gender (92). Explain whether the biological evidence for gender identity supports or refutes this theory.

suggested activities

1. Nature vs. Nurture Debate: Nutt discusses "the belief that sex assignment is a cultural pressure, not a biological one" (92). Have a class debate about whether gender is a natural phenomenon or a social construct.
2. Evaluate a Study: Choose one of the studies mentioned in chapters 14-16 or 26. Read the original study and evaluate the hypothesis, data, analysis, and conclusions in a written response.
3. Socratic Seminar on Perception: Use the following excerpt about perception in a Socratic seminar: "Did Wyatt really, truly see a woman with eye shadow and long hair . . . And a body can change a person's mind" (74-75). For the complete activity, see www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/socratic-seminar.

• correlates to common core standards

science & technical subjects

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to important distinctions the author makes and to any gaps or inconsistencies in the account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 11-12 texts and topics.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.6 Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, identifying important issues that remain unresolved.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.8 Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.9 Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.

• health/guidance connection

key topics/themes:

- transphobia/bullying
- being in the closet/coming out
- depression/suicide/self-harm
- mental health issues: anxiety, mood swings, tics, obsessive compulsive behavior
- gender confirmation surgery

discussion questions

1. Why does Nicole choose to have gender confirmation surgery when she has the option of living her life as a transgender woman without it?
2. To Wayne, "It was fine if the sons of other fathers were gay, because he had no problem working with gay people or his children having gay friends. He just didn't want that for his own son" (40). Is Wayne's sentiment homophobic? Why or why not?
3. How is gender dysphoria different from dissatisfaction with one's body in cisgender people (95)? What other disorders exist that make people feel at odds with their bodies?
4. Dr. Spack says that "gender identity is in the brain, not the anatomy, and there are many, many things that can happen to a developing brain to change or alter how a child will develop, including a child's gender identity" (107). What are some of those other things? (Discuss drugs, brain injury, learning, etc.)
5. On page 122, Paul Melanson expresses transphobia. Discuss the term "phobia." How are hatred and fear related? Is Nicole being given "rights and privileges" at school beyond what other kids get?
6. Paul and Jacob Melanson serve as an example of how bigotry can be passed down from one generation to the next. How do family and friends influence our thoughts and beliefs? What can the younger generation do to stop the cycle of prejudice (123-124)?
7. In response to the My Little Pony lunchbox case, the student's mother said, "Saying a lunchbox is a trigger for bullying is like saying a short skirt is a trigger for rape" (166). Examine this analogy.

8. Jonas and Nicole both encounter homophobic slurs at school. Jonas responds with physical confrontation, and Nicole silently fumes (184). What are some better ways to respond to this kind of language?
9. Nicole feels that because she is transgender, she has to turn down a boy who asks her on a date (182). How might it feel to have to turn down someone you like? What other factors might make a teenager feel uncomfortable being asked on a date (e.g., religion, family values, a health issue, body insecurity)?

— suggested activities

1. Gender Facts/Myths: Make a Gender Facts/Myths t-chart with the class. Have students fill in any facts and myths that they know of at the beginning of the unit. Revise the chart with the class as you read the book, adding new information and perhaps moving some items from the facts category into the myths category as they are debunked.
2. Internet Safety: When the public gets wind of Nicole’s use of the girl’s bathroom at school, strangers chime in on online forums and blogs with ignorant and hurtful comments (137). How can we use the Internet, and especially social media platforms, safely and responsibly? Read the rules of conduct for a social media platform you use, such as Twitter (support.twitter.com/articles/18311), Facebook (www.facebook.com/safety), or YouTube (www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/policy.html). Write a report on its code of conduct or safety policy. Can the policy be improved? Do users generally follow it? How well is the policy enforced?
3. Presentation: Jennifer Boylan is the first image Kelly sees in the media of a “normal-seeming woman” who is transgender. All of the other images are “of cross-dressers, of men with bad wigs and worse makeup” (46). Later in the story, a hateful portrayal of a transgender person on an episode of *Family Guy* makes Nicole think: “forever alone” (225). The media is a powerful tool for cultural transmission, and its depictions of transgender people affect how society views them. What images of transgender people exist in the media today? Present an example to the class of transgender representation in the media. Be sure to discuss its role in challenging or perpetuating stereotypes.

— correlates to national health education standards

- 1.12.2** Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.
 - 1.12.4** Analyze how genetics and family history can impact personal health.
 - 2.12.1** Analyze how the family influences the health of individuals.
 - 2.12.4** Evaluate how the school and community can affect personal health practice and behaviors.
 - 2.12.5** Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.
 - 8.12.3** Work cooperatively as an advocate for improving personal, family, and community health.
- (See www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm for a complete listing of the standards.)

— correlates to sex education standards

identity

- ID.12.CC.1** Differentiate between biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.
- ID.12.INF.1** Analyze the influence of friends, family, media, society and culture on the expression of gender, sexual orientation and identity.
- ID.12.SM.1** Explain how to promote safety, respect, awareness and acceptance.
- ID.12.ADV.1** Advocate for school policies and programs that promote dignity and respect for all.

personal safety

PS.12.CC.1 Compare and contrast situations and behaviors that may constitute bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence.

PS.12.CC.2 Analyze the laws related to bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence.

PS.12.IC.2 Identify ways in which they could respond when someone else is being bullied or harassed.

(See www.futureofsexed.org/documents/josh-fose-standards-web.pdf.)

teaching resources

ADL Education & Outreach: www.adl.org/education-outreach-curriculum-connections

Gender Spectrum: www.genderspectrum.org

GLSEN Resources for Educators: www.glsen.org/educate/resources

Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K–12 Schools
www.aclu.org/report/schools-transition

Teaching Tolerance: www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources

Transgender People and Bathroom Access: www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/Trans-People-Bathroom-Access-July-2016.pdf

relevant lesson plans

Unheard Voices: Stories and Lessons for Grades 6–12: www.glsen.org/unheardvoices.html

Caitlyn Jenner and the Power of Coming Out: www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/caitlyn-jenner-and-the-power-of-coming-out

other works of interest

I Am J, Chris Beam

She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders, Jennifer Finney Boylan

Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen, Jazz Jennings

Almost Perfect, Brian Katcher

Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out, Susan Kuklin

Redefining Realness, Janet Mock

Luna, Julie Ann Peters

If I Was Your Girl, Meredith Russo

Becoming Alec, Darwin S. Ward

The Art of Being Normal, Lisa Williamson

Parrotfish, Ellen Wittlinger

A Boy Like Me, Jennie Wood

about this guide's writer

LEANNE ARNOW is an award-winning educational media producer and freelance writer. A former New York City public school teacher, Leanne Arnow holds a Master's Degree in special education from New York University, Steinhardt, and a B.A. in psychology from Vassar College.



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