

When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community

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Illustrated by Christopher Lyles

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When You Look Out the Window tells the story of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, one of San Francisco's most well-known and politically active lesbian couples.

Describing the view from Phyllis and Del's window, this book shows how one couple's activism transformed their community – and had ripple effects throughout the world.

Guide created by Debbie Gonzales, MFA
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Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon: Pioneers for LGBTQ Rights



Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

Consider the front cover:

- Identify the objects depicted in the illustration.
- The bridge featured in the illustration is very famous. Can you tell the name of the famous bridge and the name of the city in which it is located?
- The red vehicle featured at the right-center of the page is called a ‘trolley car.’ Describe the expressions of the people riding on the car.
- Observe the two people standing at the lower center of the page. How do these people feel about each other? How do you know?
- Describe the flag placed at the lower center portion of the illustration. Tell what you know about the symbolism of this flag.
- Define the word ‘community.’ Explain what the word means to you.

Consider the back cover:

- Observe the buildings featured in the background. List their similarities and differences.
- Tell what the people featured in the illustration are doing. Describe how they feel about one another. How do you know?
- Based on your observations of the front and back covers, predict what *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community* is going to be about.

Meet the author - Gayle E. Pitman:

- Dr. Pitman works as both an author and an educator. Discuss how the two occupations compliment one another.
- Dr. Pitman teaches Psychology and courses about Women and Gender Studies. The field of Psychology focuses on understanding emotions, behaviors, and ways of thinking. Determine how writing a picture book might help others to understand how LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and/or queer) individuals think, feel, live, and love.
- On her website, Dr. Pitman states that writing books for young people allows her to share the things she loves, such as LGBT history and culture, with children. Access www.gaylepitman.com to learn more about her deep desire to share a “joyful vision of what our collective futures” can be.



Meet the illustrator - Christopher Lyles:

- Mr. Lyles is a fine artist who uses ‘mixed media’ as his art form, which means that he uses various types of materials in his illustrations. For example, he might use collage, watercolor, pastels, with pen and ink in one picture. Discuss how using mixed media allows Mr. Lyles to create interesting illustrations.
- Study the front and back covers of the book. Identify the different types of ‘media’ used in the illustrations. Describe how this type of art suggests that this story might be about diversity, happiness, acceptance, and a creative way of thinking.
- On his website (www.christopherlyles.com), Mr. Lyles says that one of his favorite things to do is find old stuff. Predict how he might use the found ‘old stuff’ in his illustrations.



Post-Reading Discussion Questions

Consider the following discussion topics after reading through When You Look Out of the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Build a Community. Search through the pages of the book to find the selected quotes. Note how the illustration depicted compliments each selection.

And we sat, holding hands, and looked out the window together.

- How do the women gazing out of the window feel about each other? How do you know?
- Observe the view from their window. List the things that they see.
- Determine why the the windows on every building are distinctly drawn. Predict why the illustrator felt that the windows needed to be highlighted as important features in the illustration.
- Notice the different types of materials used in the illustration. Identify the various materials used in this collage. Discuss the effect of the ‘multi-media’ artistic expression. How does it make you feel?

We saw empty, quiet streets.

Doors shut tightly.

So many women who didn’t have rights.

- The word ‘rights’ means justice, fairness, liberty, and freedom. Determine how being without rights would affect a person’s life and happiness.
- Authors use a literary technique called ‘symbolism’ to represent ideas, images, and emotions. Oftentimes, doors are used as symbols for openness and opportunities. Consider how the phrase ‘Doors shut tightly’ serves as symbol for limiting the chances for a full and happy life.
- Explore why, during this particular time in history, women who attempted to exercise their rights to pursue opportunities were considered to be breaking the law.

People who were afraid of us.

People who didn’t think we should love each other.

No feeling of community.

- Determine why people were afraid of Del Martin and Phyllis Martin.
- Explain why some people felt that their relationship was wrong and unlawful.
- The term ‘community’ describes a group of people who are bound together in friendship, loyalty, respect, and concern for one another. Discuss why, at that time, there was no community in which Phyllis and Del belong to and participate in.
- Consider why establishing a feeling of community was so important to Del and Phyllis.

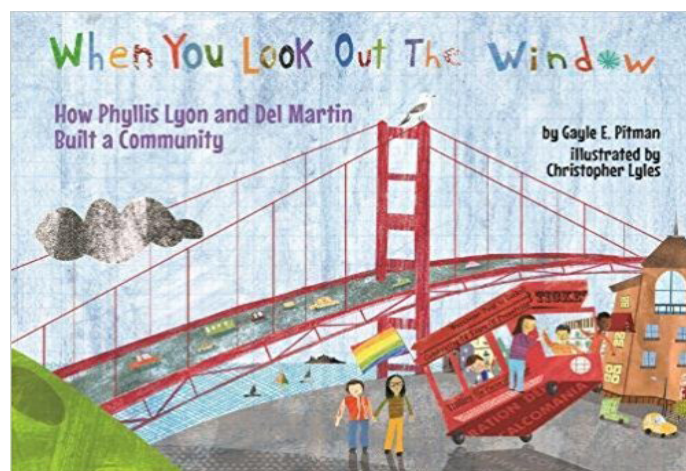


We worked to change that.

- The word ‘impact’ means force, influence, and significance. After reading through *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*, consider how their love for another coupled with their desire to establish a community forced a change in the physical and legal landscape of the city of San Francisco.
- To ‘influence’ means to lead to believe, prevail, and to bring about change. Discuss how Del and Phyllis’s influence has a lasting effect on the LGBTQ community, even today.
- The word ‘significance’ means importance, meaningful, and to make a difference. Examine the significance of the work Del and Phyllis did to make a difference in the lives of all people. Tell why building a strong, supportive community for LGBTQ individuals benefits all people.

We see a big rainbow community!

- Consider the expressions of the majority the people featured in this illustration. Describe the mood in this scene. Tell why these people are feeling this way.
- Notice that some of the buildings featured in this spread seem cheerful and brightly colored, yet there are those in the background that appear dull and old-fashioned. Predict what this form of artistic expression symbolizes.
- Observe the left, center portion of the spread. Locate the photo of a man wearing a hat and a long coat. Consider his size and placement in this illustration. Next, turn back to the illustration depicting empty, quiet streets. Note that the identical photo of the man in the hat is featured here, as well. Explain why this is so. What does the size and placement of this photo represent in each illustration?
- Compare both of these illustrations. Identify the similarities between the two. Discuss how some things remained the same throughout time.
- Contrast these illustrations. Point out how they differ with one another. Explain how Del and Phyllis’s civil rights efforts brought about vibrant, colorful change, as represented in final spread.
- Discuss each illustration as each pertains with Phyllis Lyons’s and Del Martin’s impact, influence, significance, and the of building a community.



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Collage

Fine artist Christopher Lyles used the artistic technique known as ‘collage’ to create the illustrations in *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*. Collage is art made by combining various different materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric together to create an image. In the picture book, Mr. Lyles used collage to create artwork to tell the story of Phyllis and Del’s commitment to the LGBTQ community.

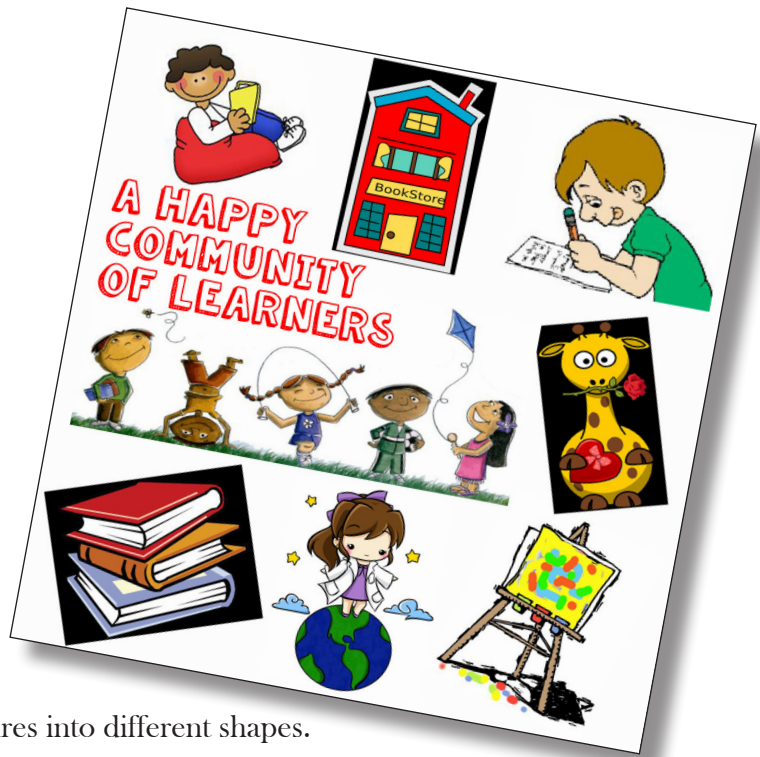
In this activity, students are instructed to use the artistic technique of collage to tell a story of their own. First, students are to create the collage. Secondly, to write a short story describing the events taking place in their artwork. Lastly, to share their collage and story with the class.

Materials:

- Poster board
- Glue
- Scissors
- Magazines
- Bits of fabric
- Markers
- Pencils
- Watercolor paints
- Bits of ribbon
- Bits of wrapping paper
- Anything of interest
- Writing paper
- Pencil

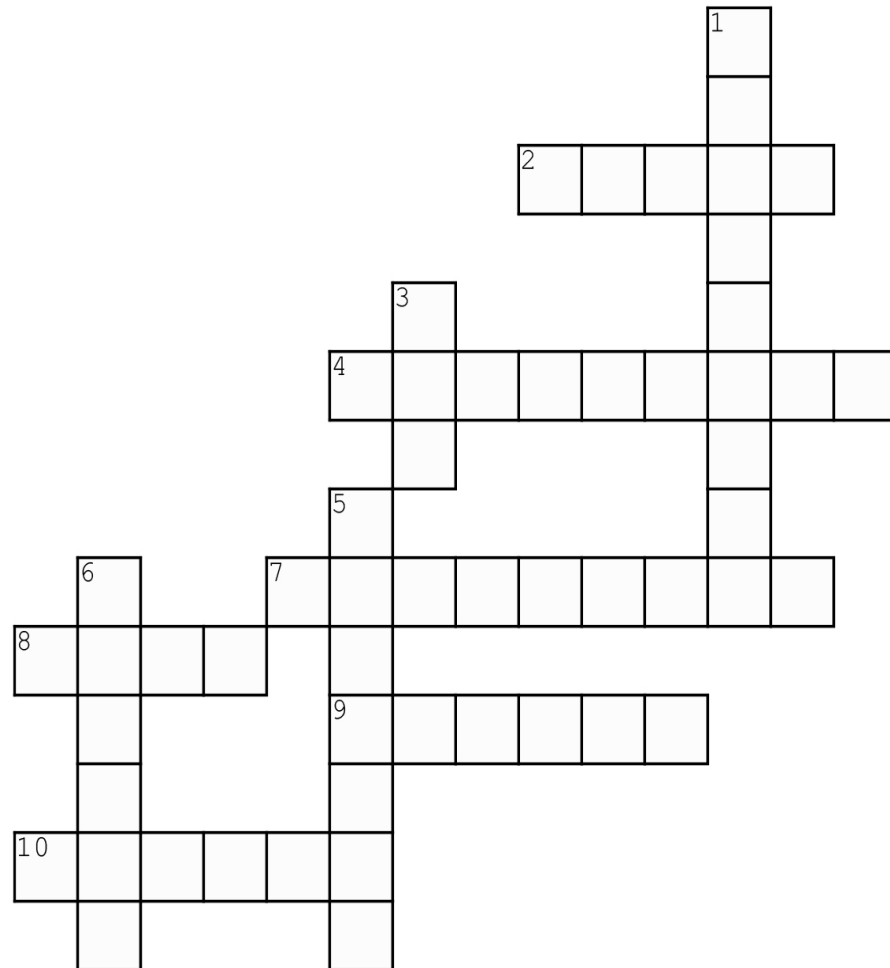
Procedure:

- Collect the materials needed for making a collage.
- Fold, cut or tear the paper and textures into different shapes.
- Develop a theme.
- Assemble the pieces on poster board before gluing them.
- Glue the collage.
- Let the collage dry.
- Write a short story about the action or theme of the collage.
- Share collage and story with the class.



Crossword Puzzle

Note: The clues for this crossword puzzle can be found in the Reading Guide located in the back pages of *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*.



Across:

2. Phyllis worked at the Glide _____ Center
4. A supportive group of people who share fondness and concern for one another
7. Del co-founded the _____ for Justice for Battered Women in 1975
8. Harvey _____, the first openly gay person to be elected to public office
9. Phyllis and Del shared a house near _____ Street
10. The _____ Gate Bridge

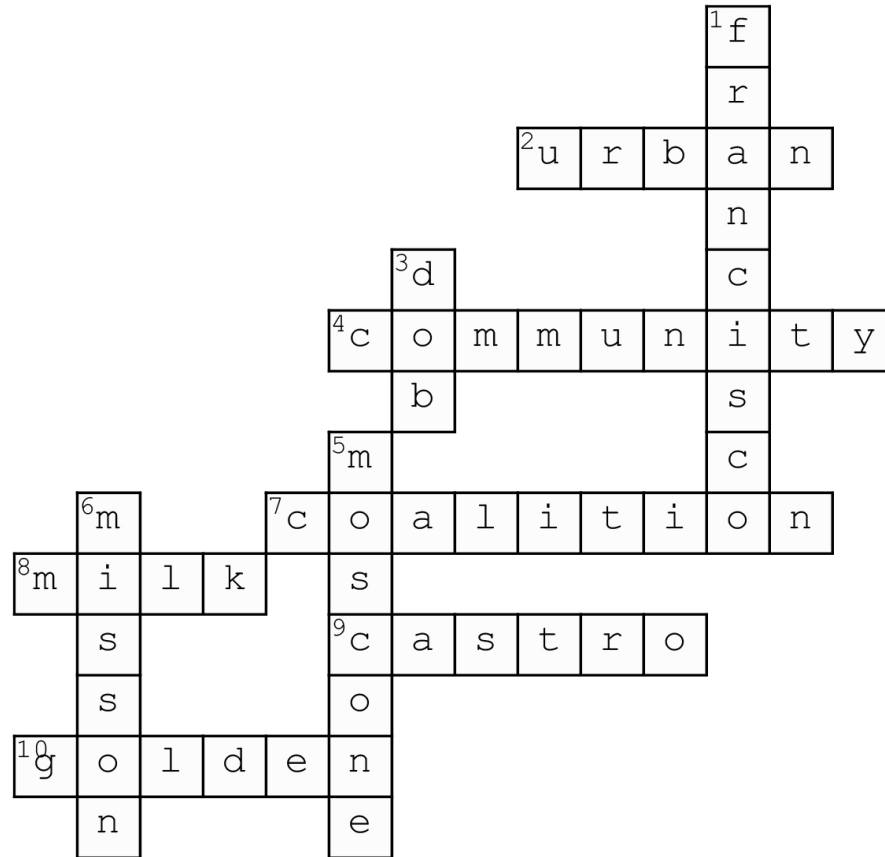
Down:

1. San _____
3. The Daughters of Bilitis
5. George _____, former mayor of San Francisco
6. The _____ District



Crossword Puzzle Answers

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Historical Timeline

*Note: The clues for this timeline activity can be found in the Reading Guide located in the back pages of *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*.*

Materials:

- Timeline Date Strips (Guide, pg. 10)
- Timeline Arrows (Guide, pgs. 11-12)
- Cardstock
- Computer paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*

Procedure:

- Print Timeline Date Strips on computer paper.
- Print Timeline Arrows on cardstock.
- Use scissors to trim around the Timeline Date Strip and Timeline Arrow borders.
- Using tape and the instructions printed on the Timeline Date Strip, create one long date strip.
- Beginning with the text-filled arrows, arrange Timeline Arrows beside the corresponding dates as indicated on the the Timeline Date Strip. Note that the arrows featuring a graphic are to be placed on the left of the Timeline Date Strip and those consisting of text only are to be placed on the right. (In efforts to assist in matching the Timeline Arrows with Timeline Date Strips, dates, locations, and events have been color-coded -- blue for topics and red for dates.)
- Continue until all Timeline Arrows have been appropriately arranged on either side of the Timeline Date Strip.




Discussion & Reflection

- Notice the placement of the arrows. Point out places on the timeline where arrows are clustered together. Discuss the events that occurred during that time. Identify reasons why a number issues and events happened at, seemingly, the same time.
- Consider the gaps in placement of the arrows. Though there are no arrows to designate special events during that time span, predict what Del and Phyllis were doing then. Do you think they continued to focused on building a community for gays and lesbians then? Explain your answer.
- Using the terms impact, influence, significance, rights, and community, describe the events and issues highlighted on the timeline in chronological order.
- In response to discussing and reflecting upon the lives and times of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, write a personal essay exploring intriguing aspects of their relationship. Explain how their commitment to each other and the community they loved changed the lives of many for generations to come.



Timeline Date Strips

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  1950 1955 1960 | <i>tape under 1960</i> 1965 1970 1975 1980 | <i>tape under 1980</i> 1985 1990 1995 | <i>tape under 1995</i> 2000 2005 2010 2015 on to present day |
|--|--|---|---|




Timeline Arrows



The
San Francisco
City Hall




The
LGBT
Community
Center



The
Golden Gate
Bridge Tunnel



The
Yerba Buena
Gardens



The Glide
Memorial
Methodist
Church




Del & Phyllis's
Home near
Castro Street



Del Martin
& Phyllis Lyon
late in life



The
Women's
Building



Del Martin
& Phyllis Lyon
in the 1950's



The
LGBT Pride
Flag





The Moscone Convention Center

The Moscone Convention Center commemorates the life of former mayor George Moscone who worked closely with Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person to be elected to public office, on civil rights issues. Both Moscone and Milk were assassinated on **November 27, 1978**.

In San Francisco, a huge **LGBT Pride flag** flies at the corner of Market and Actro Streets. A block away from the rainbow flag is the **GLBT History Museum**, which opened their doors to the public on **December of 2010**.

In the early 1950's, **Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon** met and feel in love. They moved in together on Valentine's Day, **February 14, 1953**.

In **1979**, the San Francisco Women's Center (co-founded by Del Martin) purchased the **Women's Building** in the Mission District. **The Women's Building** is a feminist and social justice-oriented place.

Phyllis and Del were married twice at the **San Francisco City Hall**. The date of their first marriage was February 12, 2004. Their marriage was voided on August 14, 2004. After the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was legal, they married again on **June 16, 2008**.

Del Martin died on **August 27, 2008**. Phyllis still lives in their house near **Castro Street**. She still enjoys looking out through the big picture window at the city she loves.

Phyllis worked for years at the **Glide Urban center**, a program affiliated with the **Glide Memorial Methodist Church**. In **1964**, three pastors formed the **Council on Religion and the Homosexual** which worked to accept gay and lesbian people within churches.

The **Yerba Buena Gardens** sits atop the Moscone Convention Center. Built in **1981**, the Moscone Convention Center was built to commemorate the life of former mayor George Moscone, a heterosexual nman who was a strong advocate for gay and lesbian people.

The **Golden Gate Bridge** is one of the most recognizable and iconic structures in the world. In **1960**, is was featured on a program cover for the first annual **Daughters of Bilitis (DOB)** national convention. The **DOB**, or the **Daughters**, was the first lesbian civil and political rights organization in the United States.

The **LGBT Community Center**, with its "wall of windows," opened its doors in **2002**.

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon were pioneers of lesbian rights. Their commitment to each other and to building a community for **LGBTQ** individuals began in the 1950's and continued **on to present day**. Countless lives have impacted by these two tenacious women. The world is a better place because of Del and Phyllis.



Common Core State Anchor Standards

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

| | | Discussion | Collage | Crossword | Timeline |
|-----------------------------|---|------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 | Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. | ● | | | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2 | Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. | ● | | ● | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 | Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. | ● | | ● | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4 | Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. | ● | | | |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 | Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. | ● | ● | | |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10 | Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. | ● | ● | ● | ● |

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2 | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. | | ● | | ● |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. | | ● | | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9 | Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. | | ● | | ● |

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 | Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. | ● | ● | | ● |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 | Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4 | Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. | | ● | | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5 | Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations. | | ● | | ● |
| CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6 | Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. | ● | ● | ● | ● |

