



4.2 - Vogue Nights: Queering Our Labels

Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Time: 60 mins

Subject Area: Racial History, Artistic Expression and Queer Media

Overview:

This lesson will be on the art of Vogue. Vogue is a dance created and expanded upon from gay male black culture. It will teach students not only how to vogue, but the history of voguing in relation to racial identity and AIDS crisis. Lastly, students will have the option of creating their own voguing night as fundraiser for their GSA to apply the skills they learned. Students will explore the art of voguing as well as the history of vogue through four short youtube videos.

The videos are the following:

- **Morgxn - Home**
(<https://tinyurl.com/Morgxn-Home>)
 - A Music Video about a young queer boy finding home in the New York Vogue.
- **Hannah Learns About The History Of Vogue | HANNAHGRAM**
(<https://tinyurl.com/Vogue-history>)
 - A Video on the History of Vogue from a gay black male perspective
- **How to Vogue with Jocuese Whitfield**
(<https://tinyurl.com/how2vogue>)
 - He's a Vogue legend who will teach the 5 basic Moves of Vogue
- **Pick your own Vogue Dance Battle Music Video to watch.**

Goals:

- Learn the history and intricacies of Vogue/'Ballroom' Dance in the Black/Brown Queer Culture
- Experiment with self expression through dance
- Create group cohesion through movement.

Materials:

- A Screen/TV for Videos
- Loud Music Speakers
- A Room that can be used as a 'Ballroom'
 - A gym Floor
 - Dance Room

- An Auditorium Stage
- A classroom without chairs

Procedure:

Step One:

Have all videos downloaded or preloaded before the meeting starts.
Clear out the space of chairs and tables.

Step Two:

Now, as students entering and settle down for for 5 mins. Go over Introductions, guidelines and pronouns for approx. 5 mins. Then, ask *“How many in the group know what Vogue is? Raise your hands. ... Okay, well we are going to watch quick music video to give those who don’t know what vogue is an idea.”* Play the Music Video Home by Morgxn.

Step Three:

After watching Morgxn - Home, ask the group questions like the following: for those of you who didn't know what vogue was before what do you think vogue is now? Mention before starting the video that Vogue as a dance was created out of the need to escape from social rejection and isolation being gay left a lot of people. Vogue was started up by Gay Black Men and Black Trans Women. Although, the word “trans” wasn't the common term back then. In this video, Hannah an ally learns about the history of vogue from Jamel Prodigy a black gay man and vogue legend.

Play the next Video *Hannah Learns About The History Of Vogue | HANNAHGRAM.*

After, ask the group what was something they learned from the video.

Say, “Now that you know, the history. Let’s watch a vogue dance battle to see how it's done.”

After you watch some dance battles, gauge interest and/or take a vote on whether the group would like to practice some basic vogue moves together. If yes, continue to step three on a different session if your meetings are 30 mins long.

Step Four:

Practice vogue dance moves. Have vogue dance music playlist in one tab and the youtube video *How to Vogue with Jocquese Whitfield* in another. Play *How to Vogue with Jocquese Whitfield* first. As group leader you will instruct the group to stand as they are able at the 1:30 minute mark at the video subtitle “The 5 Elements of Vogue.” You will need to pause at each element to give time for the GSA practice. Put on your dance teacher hat. The first pause point is **1:52** after the first element “catwalk” is introduced. Have everyone get into two parallel lines facing each other. In the style of Soul Train, . Two people, one from each of the lines, will “catwalk” their way to back of the room at the same time (*See picture below*). Then the next pair and so on. This can be cooperative or competitive. It’s really how the students take the activity. If there is an odd number, the last person can go with a pair.



Have students go back to the two lines facing each other but play the video again. Pause at **2:00** minute mark with Arms element. This time, the **FIRST** person in the right line and the **LAST** person in the left line will go ‘Vogue’ against each other with just their hand and catwalk moves. Once they pass each other, they will take the other student place and be in the spot they came from. Then, the **SECOND** person in the right line and the **SECOND** to last person in the left line will go and repeat the process until the lines are mirrored. For example, everyone in the right line is now in the left line vice versa. Don’t forget to play vogue music for the activity.

Next pause point, **2:12** is the Duck Walk. The same process as for Arms one above. After, everyone goes, students should be back at their original spots in line. Duck walk is difficult and students can just Catwalk, and/or do Arms more if they are not comfortable or able to Duck walk.

Next pause point, **2:17** is Spins. Same process as above. Make sure there is plenty of space for students arms. And Lastly, finish off the video. Now, students can spread out all over the room and do dips and if they are able Death Drops. Students can also spend the rest of the time just dancing Vogue. And at that point you will be in charge of being the DJ for the rest of the meeting. Or enlist a student passionate in Music.

Step Five:

Host a GSA Vogue Night! Find a Location like a gym or cafeteria to use and agree on date/time. All you need music speakers, some colorful lights and colorful people. Be sure to get permission from administration as well before.