Sample Essay

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Coming Out in Support of Gay Rights

 The first time I ever came out to someone was the summer before my Sophomore year of high school. Myself. It wasn’t any one moment that made me realize, but a growing sense that I was not like most of the other guys my age. Up until that point, I had never had a crush on anyone, so I couldn’t even fully count on my feelings to tell me that I am gay. My first crush, and my first heartbreak wouldn’t come for much later — but that’s a different story. “I’m gay,” I told myself, “I’m gay, but that doesn’t define me.” Despite what you may believe, coming out is not a singular thing. You do not come out once and that is it. Instead, you have to do it over and over again, every time you meet someone. “Hi, I’m Chris and I’m gay.” Only, that’s not how I introduce myself, and why should I. After all, I don’t walk up to anyone and say, “I’m Chris, and I’m a Sagittarius” or “I’m Chris, and I’m five foot six.” For a long time, I didn’t think that it should. I slowly began coming out to friends and family, but I never thought that it was a big deal, never thought that my sexuality really mattered. It took me years to realize just how wrong I was. For me, coming out was easy, no one that I cared about had a problem with my sexuality, and no one really treated me any differently. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone. Many people are afraid to come out, either because they are uncomfortable with their sexuality or because they are afraid that other people will be. This is why I think it is important for everyone that can comfortably be out, to be out. We must show these people, along with the rest of the world, that there is nothing wrong with being a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

**BODY PARAGRAPH 1:** First time teaching

* I began teaching the last semester of my senior year of college
* I was assigned to teach two 11th grade classes
* The curriculum consisted of 2 unites, The Great Gatsby and then civil rights, both to pair with the US History curriculum and help students get ready for their regent
* Gatsby took longer than I wanted, but I was excited to teach the civil rights unit
* I did get to teach one lesson about the possibility of Nick being in love with Gatsby, and the class really liked the lesson

**Body Paragraph 2:** Civil Rights Unit

* In the past, it has been taught a bunch of different ways
* I wanted to focus on more contemporary civil rights
* I assigned groups to 4 different short stories: immigration, islamophobia, coming out as transgender, and dealing with a disability
* Not every student was comfortable with the topics, and people had different opinions, but the unit went really well.
* Many students said that they learned a lot, especially about transgender issues.

**Body Paragraph 3:** Course evaluations

* At the end of the semester, I asked students to fill out a course evaluation, giving me feedback on my teaching as well as the material that I taught
* Most of the students gave positive feedback, especially about the civil rights unit
* One student in particular said that my lessons made her feel more comfortable with her bisexuality
* She was a quiet student who did not speak much in class, and I had no idea she was struggling

**Conclusion:** Takeaway

* Since then, I always try to come out in my classes and create an inclusive curriculum
* I did not know this girl was bisexual and that is true all the time. You never know who you are talking to or what they are struggling with
* Just by being out and teaching LGBTQ+ material in my class, I was able to help this student
* Even for the students that did not identify as LGBTQ+, my presence, and the lessons helped teach them how to be more accepting.
* This is why it is important to be out and increase visibility
* Of course, it is not always safe to be out, but if it is safe and you are out, it can really make a difference.
* If you are not LGBTQ+ you can still show support.