

Draft Rubric for LGBTQIA+ Categories

These categories are adapted from the Aronson, Callahan, and O'Brien article, "Messages Matter" and the [Diverse BookFinder categories](#).

Beautiful Life: A Focus on Identity

Books featuring one or more primary characters whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity places them within the LGBTQIA+ community. In these books, sexual orientation and/or gender identity is central to the story. Beautiful life books enable readers to explore the everyday world of LGBTQIA+ characters by explicitly focusing on the diverse expressions of human experience, relying on these elements to drive the story. This category includes fiction and nonfiction books and gives voice to a range of stories that invite the reader to see members of the LGBTQIA+ community in a way that honors and dignifies diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities.

On occasion, this category may also include books that do not have any primary characters and instead showcase an ensemble cast of characters that includes representation from the LGBTQIA+ community.

Examples (primary character):

- *Julian Is a Mermaid*
- *Prince and Knight*

Examples (ensemble)

- *A Church for All*
- *The Truly Brave Princesses*

Any Child

Books featuring one or more primary characters from the LGBTQIA+ community in which sexual orientation and/or gender identity is present but not central or essential to the storyline. These books invite readers to explore the everyday world of LGBTQIA+ characters by focusing on common and shared expressions of human experience.

On occasion, this category may also include books that do not have any primary characters and instead showcase an ensemble cast of characters that includes representation from the LGBTQIA+ community.

Examples (primary character):

- *Teddy's Favorite Toy*
- *The Girls*

Examples (ensemble)

- *This Love*

Biography

Narrative nonfiction books from a historical or contemporary perspective that explore the life of a particular person or group of people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Biography books must explicitly identify the person or group of people as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Examples:

- *Sewing the Rainbow: The Story of Gilbert Baker and the Rainbow Flag*
- *Enough! 20 Protesters Who Changed America*

Resilience

Fiction or nonfiction books that feature a storyline driven by the resilience of primary character(s) in response to mistreatment or oppression based on their own, a family member's, or a friend's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Resilience can be explicit or implicit: a Resilience book shows a character's persistence through mistreatment or oppression, whether or not it is resolved by the end. Mistreatment or oppression does not include self-censorship but instead originates from other character(s) or institution(s) that may include family members, friends, peers, governments, teachers, or supervisors. Mistreatment includes physical or verbal bullying that may cause the character(s) physical, psychological, or emotional harm or distress. Mistreatment can also include systematic oppression and group-based injustice that may involve experiences of or resistance to imprisonment, internment, persecution in or forced displacement from their homelands, or barriers to basic freedoms such as land, food, housing, education, health & wellness, and bodily autonomy.

Examples:

- *Jacob's Room to Choose*
- *I Love My Colorful Nails*

Coming Out

Books that explore the process through which character(s) explicitly disclose or reveal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to a specific audience for the first time. This disclosure may be made to one's self or others. The experience of coming out can occur in the real-time of the book or in characters' reflections or flashbacks. While Coming Out books may feature a character's coming out as the central plotline, they also include stories in which this experience is a smaller piece of the larger narrative.

Examples:

- *When We Love Someone, We Sing to Them* (coming out is communicated in real-time as a piece of the central story)
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* (coming out is communicated in flashbacks as a smaller piece of the central story)
- *Sam!* (coming out is communicated in real-time as the central story)

Concepts: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Concepts

Books that define and/or compare specific aspects of human difference related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. These books conceptually explain one or more identities that are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, inviting readers to consider varying perspectives related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity and to expand their vocabulary and understanding in relationship to these subjects. While Concept books may include named characters and a storyline, they place a significant focus on explaining concepts related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Examples:

- *It Feels Good to Be Yourself*
- *Jacob's Room to Choose*

Community

Books featuring cisgender heterosexual primary character(s) with named, recurring, or otherwise identified secondary and/or background characters who are part of the LGBTQIA community and whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity matter and impact the storyline.

Examples:

- *My Footprints*
- *Love is Love*

Incidental

Books featuring cishet primary character(s) with secondary and/or background characters who are part of the LGBTQIA community. In these books, sexual orientation and/or gender identity are incidental and do not impact the story line. Unlike Community books, these characters are not necessarily named, recurring, or otherwise identified.

Examples:

- *A Plan for Pops*
- *Harriet Gets Carried Away*

Informational: Factual Content

Informational books present factual information and depict members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These books may include a storyline or be encyclopedic. While members of the LGBTQIA+ community are depicted, sexual orientation and/or gender identity are not always central to the content.

Examples:

- *An ABC of Equality*
- *Pride Colors*

Intersectionality

Are any characters who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community also depicted as having a disability as defined in [IDEA, Section 300.8](#)?

Yes

No

Are any characters who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community also BIPOC?

Yes

No

References

Aronson, K.M., Callahan, B.D., & O'Brien, A.S. (2018). Messages matter: Investigating the thematic content of picture books portraying underrepresented racial and cultural groups.

Sociological Forum, 33(1), 165-185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12404>

Diverse BookFinder. (n.d.). *Our categories*. <https://diversebookfinder.org/our-categories/>