**Introduction to Pauli Murray**

Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was a poet, a lawyer, a priest, a freight hopper, Eleanor Roosevelt’s friend, arrested for refusing to comply with bus segregation laws, a closeted member of the LGBTQ+ community, a professor, and so much more. Their work has influenced Supreme Court decisions, the Civil Rights movement, and countless individual people.

Throughout the online exhibit, you may notice that Murray is referred to using both she and they. While she was alive, language and gender expressions were different than they are today. We don’t know what pronouns they might choose to use now. During her lifetime, she wrote with the language available, using she and her. However, throughout their life Murray identified sometimes as a man and sometimes as a woman, which we would now call gender fluidity. Following the example of the [Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice](https://www.paulimurraycenter.com/pronouns-pauli-murray), the AWM has chosen to use both she and they to better show the complexity of Murray’s gender identity.

**Note to the Educator**

The education materials provided were created within the framework of [Restorative Justice](https://www.edutopia.org/article/what-heck-restorative-justice-heather-wolpert-gawron) in mind. We are human, which means we will make mistakes. If you find yourself overwhelmed or without solutions as you and your students explore this content, that is okay! It is normal to mess up and make mistakes. But it’s also important to take responsibility for our actions when we do and be committed to being better allies in the future. It is okay to verbalize with your students, “I don’t know but let us find out together.” We extend our contact information, [education@americanwritersmusem.org](mailto:education@americanwritersmusem.org) in which you are welcome to ask questions. The writing activities are intended to immerse students in engaging content that will stimulate reflection, creativity, and collaboration. Students may revisit any of the writing produced throughout these activities to develop into longer writing pieces.

Includes Common Core Anchor Standards (CCR) for Writing, for 6-8 grade levels. Specific standards are not included to allow teachers across grade levels to tailor the lessons to the specific standards for their grade level.

**Pre-activities**: The [American Identities Worksheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/148ZMt6tJRVwHvAl2J-gqppIAQtOWfYpdo8HZLWt71tI/edit) will activate and build background knowledge related to the themes students will explore while engaging with the content of the virtual exhibit.

**Glossary**:

* Ethnicity: Refers to a grouping of humans based on shared social traits such as language, ancestry, history, place of origin, or culture. Examples of different ethnicities include Arab, Jewish, English, Dutch, Korean, Chinese, Nigerian, Tanzanian, Mexican, and Maori.
* Gender Identity: One’s own internal sense of self and their gender, whether that is man, woman, neither or both.
* Injustice: Lack of fairness or justice; an unjust act or occurrence
* Nationality: Refers to your country of citizenship, the country on your passport or where you hold legal rights as a citizen. Examples of different nationalities include British, American, Kenyan, French, Australian, Argentinian, and others.
* Race: Refers to a grouping of humans based on shared observable, physical features, such as skin color, facial features, and hair textures. Examples of different races include Black, White, Asian, Native American, and others.

**Topic**: Exploration of Identity

**Learning Experience**

**Objective**: Use a Strategy to produce writing connected to the theme of identity

Map Out Your Identity

Pauli Murray’s life has brought her all across the world. From her hometown of Baltimore, Maryland to teaching law in Accra, Ghana. Murray has made her mark in these places. Students are asked to explore the interactive map found in the virtual exhibit. Using the map as inspiration, they are asked to map out their identity, marking down places of significance in their lives so far. These can range from a place of birth to their grandparents’ home across the country. The maps provided are examples of how to lay out these places. It is encouraged to use any map format that works for each individual student.

My Home

Have your students read the excerpt from *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*. (This can be found on the *My Hom*e worksheet.) Have them think about how Pauli Murray describes the sights, sounds and smells of her childhood home. Then, have your students start by answering the following question: What is your home like? Describe details about how you feel there and what sights, sounds, or smells make you think of home. Encourage them to point out specific details, landmarks, memories, and any other sensory details. It can also mention where their home is, and if they currently live there. Encourage students to select a genre of their choice and plan an original piece, drafting and revising their work, and working with peers to edit their final composition.

**Post-activities:**

Watch [My Name is Pauli Murray Documentary](https://youtu.be/Uh4r95VBU2Q)

*Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* by Pauli Murray

Suggested Reading:

**Nonfiction**

*Pauli Murray: Shouting for the Rights of All People* by Deborah Nelson Linck

*Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* by Pauli Murray

*Beyond the Gender Binary* by Alok Vaid-Menon

*Continuum* by Chella Man

*Me and White Supremacy Young Readers’ Edition* by Layla F. Saad

**Fiction**

*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

*Woke: A Young Poet’s Call to Justice* by Mahogany L. Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Olivia Gatwood

*The Place for Me: Stories About the Windrush Generation* by K.N. Chimbiri, E.L. Norry, and Judy Hepburn

*We Are Not from Here* by Jenny Torres Sanchez