BRITANNICA EDUCATION TEACHER CENTER

Celebrate Black History

Black History Month is an opportunity to highlight the lives of African American leaders, thinkers, and innovators in U.S. history. To help your students celebrate the rich cultural heritage, triumphs, and adversities indelible in our country's history, we've compiled a selection of teaching and learning materials adapted to fit multiple grade levels.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

African American Heroes Activities At A Glance Modern History Makers Explore More

African American Heroes

Our biographies give students an informative glimpse into the life of a black history hero—exploring the social and historical context behind their accomplishments and the impact they continue to have on our lives today.

Information sourced from Britannica School. Not a subscriber? Contact us to learn more.

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

(1924–2005). The first Black woman ever elected to Congress, Shirley Chisholm served her native district of Brooklyn, New York, in the House of Representatives from 1969 until 1982.

READ MORE

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

(1864?–1943). American agricultural chemist George Washington Carver helped to modernize the agricultural economy of the South and helped liberate the South from its dependency on cotton.

READ MORE

BESSIE COLEMAN

(1892–1926). U.S. aviator Bessie Coleman became the first African American woman—as well as the first woman of Native American descent—to earn a license to fly an airplane.

READ MORE

KATHERINE JOHNSON

(1918–2020). During her long career working for the U.S. space program, American mathematician Katherine Johnson calculated and analyzed the flight paths of many spacecraft.

READ MORE

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

(1856–1915). American educator Booker T. Washington was the first president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. His mission was to provide practical training for African Americans.

READ MORE

IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT

(1862–1931). African American journalist and civil rights advocate Ida B. Wells-Barnett led an antilynching crusade in the United States in the 1890s by using newspapers and lectures.

READ MORE

Shirley Chisholm: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. George Washington Carver: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Bessie Coleman: NASA. Katherine Johnson: NASA Booker T. Washington: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Ida B. Wells-Barnett: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Black History Month Activities

ACTIVITY 1

QUIZ: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ROSA PARKS?

With the simple act of refusing to give up her seat on a bus, Rosa Parks, a civil rights activist, sparked a nationwide movement that would change the course of history. So, let's see what your students know about her incredible story. Test their knowledge now!

Subjects: African American History Month, Social Studies - History, U.S. History Grades 5 - 8th

ACTIVITY 2

INTERACTIVE LESSON: CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In this interactive lesson, students will learn about the historical background of the Civil Rights Movement in America and several brave individuals and groups who stood up against racial segregation during the 1950s and 1960s.

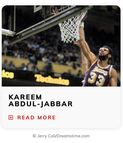
Through media, text, and images, discuss the following questions: How did civil rights leaders and activists work to end segregation? What were they protesting? And did their protests bring about change?

Information sourced from **Expedition: Learn!**. Not a subscriber? Contact us to learn more.

ACTIVITY 3

AFRICAN AMERICAN BASKETBALL SUPERSTARS

LeBron James has now scored more points than any National Basketball Association player in history. He passed fellow Los Angeles Laker Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career 38,387 points during a game against the Oklahoma City Thunder on February 7, 2023. So, what do the top 2 scorers have—and don't have—in common?



KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

READ MORE

LEBRON JAMES

READ MORE

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Have students use this tool to help them organize their thinking! Discuss similarities and differences between the two basketball greats using the compare and contrast methodology—early life, championships won, honors and awards obtained, and other data put side by side.

DOWNLOAD THE VENN DIAGRAM

Black History at a Glance

Explore these articles in Britannica School that provide students with a glance at African American history.

Information sourced from **Britannica School**. Not a subscriber? Contact us to learn more.

African American History Month

The idea for an African American History Month was first conceived by the historian Carter G. Woodson and members of its Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History). Together they organized the Negro History Week, beginning in February 1926. They selected the month of February for this celebration because it was close to the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln, who had been responsible for the Emancipation Proclamation, and the African American orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Corbis Cutt/NASA

African American History at a Glance

The story of African Americans in the United States is one of both limitless suffering and soaring hope. Two and a half centuries of slavery and segregation prevented Black people from exercising the rights of citizenship taken for granted by white Americans. Nevertheless, African Americans persevered. They built universities and achieved heights in all spheres of activity, from arts and entertainment to aviation and science.

Pete Souza—Official White House Photo

Modern History Makers

From politicians to astronauts, these modern-day heroes have already made their mark on history. Easily explore curated collections of Britannica School articles and multimedia featuring the following and many more.

Information sourced from **Britannica School**. Not a subscriber? Contact us to learn more.

ELEMENTARY RESOURCE PACK MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL RESOURCE PACK

BARACK OBAMA

44th President of the U.S.

MEGHAN MARKLE

Duchess of Sussex

EDDIE MURPHY

Comedian, Actor, and Singer

SERENA WILLIAMS

Professional Tennis Player

JAY-Z

Rapper and Entrepreneur

MAE JEMISON

Physician and Astronaut

Barack Obama: Pete Souza—Official White House Photo; Meghan Markle: Chris Jackson/Getty Images; Eddie Murphy: Frazer Harrison/Getty Images; Serena Williams: Scott Barbour/Getty Images; Jay-Z: PRNewsFoto/AHF/LMP Images; Mae Jemison: NASA.

Explore More

Information sourced from Britannica School. Not a subscriber? Contact us to learn more.

THE MAN BEHIND #BHM

GREAT MIGRATION

SEGREGATION

JIM CROW LAWS

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Carter G. Woodson, Hulton Archive/Getty Images; Great Migration, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Segregation, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Jim Crow Laws, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. March on Washington Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Underground Railroad: Photos.com/Getty Images. Negro League Baseball: UPI/Bettmann Archive. Martin Luther King, Jr.: National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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