Black History Month
February as Black History Month
Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month, which is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. Black History Month grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African American people.

Black History Month 2021 Theme, "The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity"
The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) determines the theme each year for Black History Month. They explain, “The black family has been a topic of study in many disciplines—history, literature, the visual arts and film studies, sociology, anthropology, and social policy. Its representation, identity, and diversity have been reverenced, stereotyped, and vilified from the days of slavery to our own time. The black family knows no single location, since family reunions and genetic-ancestry searches testify to the spread of family members across states, nations, and continents.”

Teaching Black History
In schools and classrooms, Black History Month is an excellent time to explore the Black experience—including the history and culture of African-American people, the injustice faced by them and how that injustice has been and continues to be confronted and overcome. As with other similarly themed months, it is important
not to isolate black history and culture into one month during the year. Black history is American history and should be integrated into the curriculum throughout the school year.

This month we feature our teaching guide 10 Ideas for Teaching Black History Month as well as additional K-12 curriculum and other resources to bring the themes of Black History Month to your classroom during February and throughout the year.

Curriculum Resources: Historical

**LESSON PLAN**

**Civil Rights Act of 1964: 7 Ways to Commemorate the Anniversary**

*ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL*

Seven ideas for teaching about the Civil Rights Act in your classroom to commemorate the anniversary.

**LESSON PLAN**

**Major League Baseball and the Negro Leagues: Correcting an Injustice**

*MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL*
In the late 1800's, Black professional baseball players were banned from playing in the major leagues. Teach students about the history of the Negro Leagues, the segregation of Black players and MLB's decision to make some Negro League player statistics part of MLB history.

LESSON PLAN

**Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil Rights: Relevancy for Today**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

How far do we still need to go in order to achieve equality and full civil rights in the United States? Use this multi-grade curriculum unit to help students examine civil rights in the United States past and present.
**60 Years Later: The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education**

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Teach students about the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and analyze the modern day “school-to-prison pipeline” and the opportunity gap that exist in our public schools.

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**Shirley Chisholm: Unbought, Unbossed and Unforgotten**

HIGH SCHOOL

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*Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration*
A lesson plan that pays tribute to the life and accomplishments of Shirley Chisholm, a civil rights leader and the first African American woman elected to Congress.

HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON PLAN

The Selma to Montgomery March for Voting Rights

HIGH SCHOOL

High school students explore voting restrictions today and gain insight into what can be done to preserve the right to vote as they learn about the historical struggle for voting rights and the Selma to Montgomery March.
This curriculum unit commemorates the 60th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. High school students explore the history of school desegregation in the United States and examines current patterns of resegregation in public schools.
Help high school students explore the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the difference between the right to vote and the ability to vote and reflect on some of the current day threats to voting rights and what can be done about it.

August 2020 marks the centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Help high school students understand how racism played a role in Black women being excluded from the right to vote.
Teach about the life, challenges and accomplishments of Rosa Parks, important social activist during the Civil Rights Movement.

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**ADL Honors the Life and Achievements of Rosa Parks (1913-2005)**

Teach about the life, challenges and accomplishments of Rosa Parks, important social activist during the Civil Rights Movement.

**LESSON PLAN**

**What are Reparations and Should We Enact Them?**

HIGH SCHOOL

The issue of reparations has a long history in the United States. Teach students about reparations for slavery and its historical context.
In the late 1800's, Black professional baseball players were banned from playing in the major leagues. Teach students about the history of the Negro Leagues, the segregation of Black players and MLB's decision to make some Negro League player statistics part of MLB history.
LESSON PLAN

**Emojis and Me**

MIDDLE SCHOOL

22-year-old digital artist, O'Plérou Grebet, created his own emojis, reflecting life in contemporary West Africa. Help students learn why representing one's culture, nation and identity is important in using emojis.

© O'Plérou Grebet

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LESSON PLAN

**Casting of 'The Little Mermaid' Brings Pride and Prejudice**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL
An African-American actress was chosen for the role of Ariel in the remake of *The Little Mermaid*. Elementary and middle school students explore the significance of the casting decision and the impact of diversity and representation in different forms of media.

LESSON PLAN

**Representing the People: Diversity and Elections**

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson plan helps 8-12 grade students explore and understand the current landscape of elected officials and Presidential hopefuls and how the 2018 midterm election broke records and barriers regarding diversity.
Our country is becoming increasingly diverse. Help students consider the importance of representation and visibility in entertainment as they examine the movies and television shows they watch for a portrayal of diversity in characters.
This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn about the sweeping changes in U.S. currency, analyze the role of symbols and their impact and articulate their own opinions about the importance of symbols and symbolic gestures in our society.

LESSON PLAN
Believe in Something: Nike, Kaepernick and Social Change
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn about Nike's decision to feature N.F.L. player Colin Kaepernick in ad and explore and express what they strongly believe in through creative writing.
LESSON PLAN

Noose Incidents and Their Historical Context

A high school lesson that provides students an opportunity to reflect on the historical context of lynching in the U.S., the current day use of the hangman’s noose, the increase use of hate symbols and explore what can be done about it.

LESSON PLAN

Athletes and Activism
Throughout history, athletes have used their power and influence to stand up for social justice. In this lesson plan, students explore different opinions about the role that professional athletes should play in politics and activism.

LESSON PLAN

What is the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

This lesson provides an opportunity for high school students to understand more about the School-to-Prison Pipeline, learn about its history and evolution and begin to plan some activities to teach others about it and take action.
Students learn about the history of Black Lives Matter, analyze the controversy about using the term “All lives matter” and express their point of view through opinion exercises.
In this high school lesson, students will reflect on their own experiences and opinions about movies, analyze demographic information about the movie industry and explore the role of implicit bias.

**Cliff/Licensed under CC BY 2.0**

**LESSON PLAN**

**The Alt Right and White Supremacy**

High school lesson plan to help students learn about the alt right and explore historical and current day examples of white supremacy.
Help students understand how and why COVID-19 disproportionately affects African American people and reflect on possible actions to address the disparities.
Using professional basketball player Kyle Korver's essay on racism and white privilege, students explore manifestations of privilege and strategize how to use it to engage in ally behavior.

**Curriculum Resources: Race and Racism**

**LESSON PLAN**

**10 Ideas for Teaching Black History Month**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Ten ideas for teaching about Black History Month in K-12 classrooms.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Through review and examination of videos, articles, data research and hashtag campaigns—#1000BlackGirlBooks and #WeNeedDiverseBooks, students learn about and discuss the importance of diverse literature.

Library of Congress

LESSON PLAN

Diverse Books Matter

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Through review and examination of videos, articles, data research and hashtag campaigns—#1000BlackGirlBooks and #WeNeedDiverseBooks, students learn about and discuss the importance of diverse literature.

Airman 1st Class Kaylee Dubois, photographer

LESSON PLAN

Everyday Bias
What is implicit and explicit bias? Students learn about these terms as they reflect on examples of everyday bias in the news and situations in which they have experienced or encountered everyday type of bias.

Race and racism are topics that regularly come up in the news and populate our social media feeds. 5th-7th grade students explore race and racism using a range of young people's first encounter stories.
LESSON PLAN

When Perception and Reality Collide: Implicit Bias and Race

High school lesson plan to help students explore the role of implicit bias in perceptions of African-American boys and men.

Microaggressions In Our Lives

LESSON PLAN
This lesson provides an opportunity for high school students to explore what microaggressions are, how they have experienced them and what can be done to counteract them.

**Students Teaching About Racism in Society (STARS), Ohio University Athens, OH**

**LESSON PLAN**

**Lonnie Chavis of 'This Is Us' Writes about Racism**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Explore the concept of racism with young people through the perspective of *This Is Us* young actor Lonnie Chavis. Help students analyze the interpersonal and institutional ways that racism manifest and reflect on their own experiences.
Children and Young Adult Literature with Educator and Parent Discussion Guides

**BLOG**

**12 Exceptional Kid Lit Books to Read for Black History Month**

Recommended children’s and young adult books to read for Black History Month.

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**CHILDREN’S LITERATURE**

**Parker Looks Up: An Extraordinary Moment**

When Parker Curry came face-to-face with the portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama at the National Portrait Gallery, she didn’t just see the First Lady of the U.S. She saw...
a queen—one with dynamic self-assurance, regality, beauty, and truth who captured this young girl's imagination.

**The Undefeated**

This book/poem is a love letter to Black life in the United States. It highlights the unspeakable trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes.
Sulwe
Sulwe is darker than everyone in her family and wishes she was “beautiful and bright” like her sister and mother. This picture book creates a whimsical and poignant story to inspire children to see their own unique beauty.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice
From fighting for the use of a soccer field in middle school to fighting for the people of her home state in Congress, Senator Harris used her voice to speak up for what she believed in and for those who were otherwise unheard.
New Kid

Instead of sending Jordan Banks to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one.

Hurricane Child

Being born during a hurricane is unlucky, and twelve-year-old Caroline, who lives on Water Island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, has had her share of bad luck lately. But when a new student arrives, Caroline believes her luck is turning around.
**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

**Lillian's Right to Vote**

This book recalls America's battle for civil rights in an account of one woman's fierce determination to make it up the hill and make her voice heard.

**The Hate U Give**

The uneasy balance between two worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer.
**Firebird**

In her debut picture book, Misty Copeland tells the story of a young girl whose confidence is fragile and who is questioning her own ability to reach the heights that Misty has reached.

**March: Book One**

Book One of this graphic novel trilogy spans Congressman John Lewis’ youth in rural Alabama, his life-changing meeting with Martin Luther King, Jr., the birth of the
Nashville Student Movement and their battle to tear down segregation through nonviolent lunch counter sit-ins, building to a stunning climax on the steps of City Hall.

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone
Melba Doretta Listons loved the sounds of music as far back and she could remember; she overcame race and gender obstacles to become a famed trombone player, composer and arranger.
Teaching Tools

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Early Childhood FAQs

The Question Corner provides a collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Challenging Biased Language

On a daily basis—in the lunchroom, at the grocery store, in school hallways and even at home—people hear and sometimes use words and phrases that demean or ridicule. Here are some strategies for responding.
TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment

Tips for the classroom educator to create an anti-bias learning environment.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

How Should I Talk about Race in My Mostly White Classroom?

Strategies for discussing race and racism in classrooms of predominately white students.
TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Guidelines for Achieving Bias-Free Communication

Be aware of words, images and situations that suggest that all or most members of a group are the same. Stereotypes often lead to assumptions that are unsupportable and...

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Making it Meaningful: Interrupting Biased Comments in the Classroom

What do you do if you think you hear one of your students make a racist, homophobic or sexist remark? Rosalind Wiseman looks at how well meaning teachers can contribute to the problem and discusses ways to do things differently.
The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's came about out of the need and desire for equality and freedom for African Americans and other people of color. Nearly one...

Rowland Scherman for USIA, Photographer. Courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism
Our country has a long history of youth-led movements that brought about significant social change. Young people have advocated for child labor laws, voting rights, civil rights and more. Here are ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls.

![Image of students sitting on the ground](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Carlos Amador / CC BY-NC 2.0

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism**

As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.