Black History Month

Fortieth Congress of the United States of America;

At the Third Session,

Begun and held at the city of Washington, on Monday, the seventh day of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight.

A RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both Houses concurring) That the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-quarters of said legislatures shall be valid as part of...
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 Americans.

Black History Month 2020 Theme: "African-Americans and the Vote"
The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment on February 3, 1870. The Fifteenth Amendment gave Black men the right to vote by declaring that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It wasn't until the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1920 that Black women gained voting rights. However, their constitutional right was limited in many states due to discriminatory laws.

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.

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**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
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.
LES SSO N PLAN

Shirley Chisholm: Unbought, Unbossed and Unforgotten

HIGH SCHOOL

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.

LES SSO N 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.
LESSON PLAN

Voting Rights Then and Now

HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson provides an opportunity for high school students to explore the difference between the right to vote and the ability to vote, learn more about the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and reflect on some of the current day threats to voting rights and what can be done about it.
Women's Suffrage, Racism and Intersectionality

HIGH SCHOOL

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.

![Image of women's suffrage movement](image)

Courtesy of the New York Public Library

Curriculum Resources: Current Issues

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.
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.

Twitter/chloexhalle
**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.

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**On-Screen Diversity: Why Visibility in Media Matters**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL

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.

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**

HIGH SCHOOL

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.
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.
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.

Stuart Alphine / CC BY 2.0

LESSON PLAN

Black Lives Matter: From Hashtag to Movement

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.

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The Alt Right and White Supremacy
HIGH SCHOOL

High school lesson plan to help students learn about the alt right and explore historical and current day examples of white supremacy.

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.
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.
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.
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
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.

Children and Young Adult Literature with Educator and Parent Discussion Guides

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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.

**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 Liston loved the sounds of music as far back as she could remember; she overcame race and gender obstacles to become a famed trombone player, composer, and arranger.

Children's Literature

The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice.

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.
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.

**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.

**Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment**

Tips for the classroom educator to create an anti-bias learning environment.
Strategies for discussing race and racism in classrooms of predominately white students.

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.

BACKGROUNDERS

Civil Rights Movement

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...
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,...

**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,...
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.