

Black History Month - Past to Present

Internet Lesson Plan

Grade level: 6-8

Teacher Activities

GOAL:

To utilize Internet resources to learn about the people, heroes, and contributors to America as it relates to Black History Month.

OBJECTIVE:

At the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

- Describe Benjamin Banneker and his accomplishments.
- List Benjamin Banneker's inventions.
- Explain the life and times of George Washington Carver.
- Create a resume and timeline of Dr. King's life, accomplishments, and rise to prominence.
- Create a travel brochure highlighting the King Center in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Summarize Dr. King's message in his "I have a Dream" speech.
- Identify and outline the qualities which led Rosa Parks to become the "Mother" of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Create a timeline of Frederick Douglass' historical contributions.
- Design a commercial starring Jesse Owens, Olympic athlete, empowering kids to be individuals.
- Design a baseball card for Jackie Robinson outlining his accomplishments as an African American.
- Identify and discuss the unique characteristics displayed by Harriet Tubman during her life.
- Write a biography for an African American woman outlining her life, accomplishments, and contributions.
- Create a poster celebrating an African American woman's accomplishments.
- Explore and describe the "Buffalo Soldiers" of the Wild West.

DURATION:

Two weeks, one hour of on-line time each day.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY:

Divide the class into pairs or small groups of approximately 3-4 participants each. Provide each group with a two-pocket folder. Distribute the activities in the left pocket of each folder to encourage problem-solving strategies within the group.

Have students utilize the right hand pocket of the folder to record their strategies, take notes, and track project completion. Students should store information they have gathered or printed from the Internet in this pocket as well.

Provide additional resources for students relating to Black History Month. Encourage both on-line and off-line research through reference material.

PREREQUISITE:

A short introduction to the Internet with information on access and addresses is required before participants go on-line. Ensure that students are familiar with the World Wide Web and the browser they will be using.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:

The activities in this unit will be evaluated on the basis of student participation and performance. Team folders will include information gathered in the process of completing the activities. Encourage cooperative learning, group process, problem-solving, competition, and the use of the Internet as these activities are completed. Serve as facilitator and guide throughout the activities.

OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES:

- The activities in this lesson plan focus on historical heroes. Do current heroes exist? Who will be the heroes of tomorrow? Select a current hero, someone you consider to have done or contributed to the world in a heroic way. Create a flyer about this heroic person including his/her name, date and place of the heroic feat, and what it entailed. Be sure to include information about who would consider this person a hero and why.
- Create a 3-column table for analyzing heroic qualities and feats. List all the historical figures explored in the activities in this lesson plan in column one. In column two, list the personality traits or qualities displayed by this person, and in column 3, list how they displayed these qualities - what actions did they take that exhibited these qualities.
- Compare and contrast the information gathered. Can you come to any conclusions about "what makes a hero?"

- Select one of the historic people you've studied during Black History Month. Pretend you are him/her for a day. What is a day in his/her life really like? Write an essay describing a typical day - outlining activities in which you participate, food you eat, and people with whom you interact. When complete, compare a day in his/her life with your normal day. How do your lives compare?
- What could it have been like to be a slave? After completing the activities in this lesson plan, you should have a better understanding of the daily perils faced by slaves. Create a "Day in the Life of a Slave" journal which depicts an average day for a slave. How does this compare to your daily life? Any similarities or differences?
- Ask students to complete the Internet based treasure hunt on African Americans that can be found on the "Education First's Black History Treasure Hunt" Web site at <http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/hunt.html>. See who can locate the answer to all 14 questions first. After completing the Treasure Hunt, try to answer "The Big Question." Summarize in a short essay what you learned about Black History. Reflect on any changes you've made in the way you think about and will celebrate Black History Month from this point forward.
- Even though the deadline for this year has passed (12/13/96), make students aware of this program, so they can prepare themselves for the following year's scholarship sponsored by McDonald's titled "Black History Makers of Tomorrow". They are looking for high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate exceptional leadership, character, scholarship, and community service. To learn more about this program, visit the Web page "Northwest News - School" at <http://www.nwnews.com:80/vvissues/v10n44/school3.html>.

MATERIALS NEEDED BY TEACHER:

Two-pocket folders

TEACHER NOTES:

This lesson should be covered during the month of February when you celebrate Black History month with your students. It focuses on the people behind it all. After all, without the people, there would be no history to celebrate. As your students focus on the great leaders, strong personalities, and political activists of the past and the present, you will no doubt find that there are more people about whom to learn and celebrate than time allows. The ten activities which follow take a look at some of the famous African Americans and their contributions to the world.

Ask your students to begin thinking about "heroes" and the qualities associated with people who achieve heroic status in their minds. First of all, what is each person's definition of a hero? Ask the students as a group to define this term

and come up with a definition. Put this definition on a chart, poster, or bulletin board. Some things to think about as you formulate your definition are:

- What makes one person stand out in the crowd and make a difference?
- What do all heroic people have in common?

As students complete the activities for Black History Month, they will be asked to identify unique qualities or characteristics for each of the famous African Americans they explore. Upon completion of the activities, ask students to reflect back on the similarities of each of these people, even though many of them lived in different times and under different circumstances. Ask students to compare and contrast each of these historical people.

What about modern heroes? Create a list of African Americans today who have achieved or will achieve heroic status when we take a look back at history years from now. This lesson may help students not only celebrate African American leaders, but also begin to see and realize heroic qualities that may exist in themselves. Future leaders may be sitting in your classroom right now!

In Activity #3, an audio player is needed in order to play the sound clips that can be downloaded at "GRIT - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." at <http://grit.com:80/mlk.html>. The required audio player is available at that site as well.

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Student Activities

ACTIVITY #1: BENJAMIN BANNEKER

Did you know an African American successfully predicted the solar eclipse that occurred on April 14, 1789, contradicting other forecasters? This renowned African American mathematician, author, astronomer, and farmer had many accomplishments and contributions throughout his life. To learn more about his background, life, and accomplishments, visit the following sites which celebrate his contributions:

- ✓ "NetNoir: Benjamin Banneker" at <http://www.netnoir.com/spotlight/tech/techbann.html>
- ✓ "Welcome to Washington, D.C." at <http://www.afamnet.com:80/citypage/dc/dc.htm>

Then answer these questions:

- Where and when was Benjamin Banneker born?
- What was his family and their background like?
- What accomplishments did he achieve in his lifetime?
- Is he credited with any inventions? If so, what?

ACTIVITY #2: GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

What do sweet potatoes, peanuts, pecans, and Georgia clay have to do with the famous African American, George Washington Carver? This famous Missourian not only made significant botanical contributions, but he is also credited with hundreds of inventions. To learn more about this ingenious scientist and his contributions, take a look at the following Web sites:

- ✓ "George Washington Carver" at <http://www.localnet.com/~adonis2/carver.htm>
- ✓ "NetNoir: George Washington Carver" at <http://www.netnoir.com/spotlight/tech/techcarv.html>
- ✓ "George Washington Carver" at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~ylahrim/Carver.html>
- Where and when was George Washington Carver born?
- What was his family and their background like?

- What accomplishments did he achieve in his lifetime?
- With what is he credited inventing?
- How has George Washington Carver been honored?

ACTIVITY #3: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Obviously one of the most notable participants in the Civil Rights movement was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His contributions to American history remain paramount still today. King's stand for non-violent social change not only touched many lives in the past, but continues to touch future generations.

How much do you really know about the man, his life, his cause, and his legacy? To learn more about this powerful figure's exceptional oratorical skills and personal courage, explore the Web site "The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University" at <http://www-leland.stanford.edu/group/King/> .

- After reading his biography, create a resume for this Civil Rights leader.
- Create a timeline of Dr. King's life which outlines major or significant events in his rise to prominence.

Visit the "Dr. King Timeline" at <http://buckman.pps.k12.or.us/room100/timeline/kingframe.html> to see an example of material about Martin Luther King, Jr. created by kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade students. See how beautifully they depicted his life. Now you give it a shot using information about the King Center found at the Web site "The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University" at <http://www-leland.stanford.edu/group/King/>.

- Create a travel brochure which highlights the King Center. Be sure to include the following information about it:
 - ✓ Location
 - ✓ Highlights
 - ✓ Purpose
 - ✓ When and by whom it was established

Dr. Martin Luther King's most famous speech is probably the "I have a Dream" speech which was delivered in 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Since you are too young to have experienced that speech in person, let's revisit it and analyze his vision. Visit the Web site "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." at <http://grit.com:80/mlk.html> where you will find the text as well as actual audio clips of the speech.

- What was Dr. King's message in this speech?

ACTIVITY #4: ROSA PARKS

When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus because her feet were tired after a long day of work, do you think she knew what was ahead for her? This strong and courageous woman became known as the "Mother" of the Civil Rights Movement because of that event. To learn more about the Civil Rights

Movement and the catalyst she became in that fight for equality, visit the following Web pages:

- ✓ "Rosa Parks, A Courageous Black Woman" at <http://www.moore.net:80/~hrmoore/rosa.htm>
- ✓ "Fighting for Equality" at <http://www.seattletimes.com:80/mlk/movement/Seatimeline.html>

Then answer these questions:

- What were the events and the role that Rosa Parks played in Black History?
- What law(s) did she break and how was she punished?
- What affect did her actions have on history? Provide details in your answer.
- When did the laws against which she was fighting change? How long did it take to make these changes?
- What traits, or qualities does Rosa Parks display that make her an outstanding figure in history?
- Is she still fighting the cause? How and why?

ACTIVITY #5: FREDERICK DOUGLASS

This leader in the abolitionist movement had a thirst for learning. He taught himself and others to read and write during a time when this was strictly prohibited. As an escaped slave, he found his way in the world as a great writer and orator. His personal strength and convictions for his beliefs guaranteed him his place in the history books. You can share Frederick Douglass' life and accomplishments at the following sites:

- ✓ "Frederick Douglass" at <http://199.165.72.1/thinkquest/models/cb/theodore/fdoug.htm>
- ✓ "Frederick Douglass" at <http://education.ucdavis.edu:80/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/Douglas.htm>
- ✓ "Frederick Douglass Portrait" at <http://potter.cc.keele.ac.uk/depts/as/Portraits/douglass.html>

- Describe the life and times of Frederick Douglass.
- What was his real name?
- What is the story behind his name change?
- Create a timeline of his historical contributions.
- What business did he start after he escaped from slavery?
- What role did he play in politics later in life?
- List his publications and books.
- What government positions did he hold?

ACTIVITY #6: JESSE OWENS

Some describe him as the greatest Olympic athlete in history. Jesse Owens showed the world his talents and his spirit during the Olympic Games. To learn more about his life and athletic accomplishments, visit the "Official Site of Jesse Owens" at <http://www.cmgww.com/sports/owens/owens.html>.

- Describe his Olympic accomplishments.
- List where and when the Olympic Games took place.
- Describe the mood of these Olympic Games and the significance of Jesse Owens' medals.
- Janet Reno, Attorney General of the United States, has asked you to create a commercial to be sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice aimed at grabbing kids' attention and helping them celebrate Black History Month and the heroes around it. The focus of the commercial should be Jesse Owens and the traits he displayed which made him great. Remember the larger message here is empowering kids and teaching them about the power of one individual.

ACTIVITY #7: JACKIE ROBINSON

In 1947 he became a Brooklyn Dodger and changed not only the history of baseball, but the history of professional sports. He opened the door to professional sports for all African Americans. Take a closer look at the man, his career, and his contributions by visiting the "Official Site of Jackie Robinson" at <http://www.cmgww.com/baseball/jrobin/jrobin.html>.

- List everything you can find at which he was "first."
- List 5 of the most significant baseball milestones he attained.
- Describe the traits Jackie Robinson displayed that allowed him to face prejudice and social challenges.
- Create a baseball card for this athlete. Instead of using the usual baseball statistics, include facts which celebrate his accomplishments as an African American.

ACTIVITY #8: HARRIET TUBMAN

Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave herself, valued freedom so much, she risked her own life to lead family and friends to freedom. This famous conductor of the Underground Railroad helped countless people leave the world of slavery and enter the land of the free. Although she was born a slave, she died a free person because of her beliefs, convictions, and strength. Explore this icon in Black History by visiting the "Harriet Tubman: An Unforgettable Black Leader" Web site at <http://www.acusd.edu/~jdesmet/tubman.html>.

- How many times did Harriet Tubman return to the South to lead slaves to freedom?
- How many slaves did she help reach freedom?

- Why did she carry a gun as part of her freedom forays?
- How much was offered for her capture?
- What was her nickname and how did she acquire it?
- What characteristics did Harriet Tubman display which made her a hero?

ACTIVITY #9: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

As the saying goes, "for every great man, there's a great woman behind him." You've already been introduced to two of these women in previous activities. Let's explore further to get a better look at some of the many African American women who have shown tremendous strength and character through their contributions. Visit the Web site "Netnoir: Celebrate Women's History" at <http://www.netnoir.com/spotlight/women/index.html>.

- Select one African American woman to explore in detail. Create a brief biography of her life, accomplishments, and contributions.
- Be sure to include the period in history during which this person lived/lives.
- List the traits this African American woman displays/displayed that makes her stand-out as a leader.
- Create a poster celebrating this African American woman's life and accomplishments.

ACTIVITY #10: THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

When we think about the "Wild West" of the past, we may conjure up images of John Wayne and Clint Eastwood as the gun slinging tamers of the western frontier. Taking a closer look at this period in history reveals 20 percent of all cavalry forces on the American frontier were of African American descent. Learn more about the African American soldier by exploring "The Buffalo Soldiers on the Western Frontier" Web page at <http://www.horseworld.com/imh/buf/buftoc.html>.

- What role did African Americans play in the Civil War?
- When were the 9th & 10th regiments established?
- Who nicknamed them the "Buffalo Soldiers?"
- What role did these soldiers play in taming the frontier? Who were their adversaries?
- What accomplishments helped distinguish these units in the Army?
- What was daily life for these troops on the frontier like?