



Black History Month

Assembly summary

Aim

- To learn about the history and purpose of Black History Month
- To consider the need for awareness and understanding of why this event is so important.

Context

Black History Month (BHM) is celebrated in different countries around the world. In the UK it is held in October and is a time to recognise the achievements and contributions of black people across society.

The video explores the following:

- The history of Black History Month
- The need for black history to be celebrated and remembered each year
- Inspiring black people from history and their stories
- The positive themes and ideas linked to supporting black history and quality for all

This video can be used as part of an assembly or classroom discussion. It includes elements of the following curriculum standards:

English National Curriculum

- KS3 Citizenship: the precious liberties enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom; the nature of rules and laws and the justice system, including the role of the police and the operation of courts and tribunals; the roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities.
- KS3 History: ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745–1901.
- KS4 History: develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of specified key events, periods and societies in local, British, and wider world history; and of the wide diversity of human experience. Engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers. Develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues. Critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context. Develop an awareness of why people, events and developments have been accorded historical significance and how and why different interpretations have been constructed about them. Organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions.

- KS4 Citizenship: human rights and international law; diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding; the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity.
- British values: the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Inclusion: Teachers should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

- Social Studies: People, past events and societies.

Northern Ireland National Curriculum

- KS3: Learning for Life and Work – Local and Global Citizenship: Controversial issues guidance; teaching controversial issues. diversity and inclusion; human rights and social responsibility; equality and social justice; democracy and active participation
- KS4: Learning for Life and Work: Preparation for adult life.

Curriculum for Wales (CfW)

- Learning Purposes: Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society
- Areas of Learning and Experience: Health and well-being
- Humanities: Local, national and international perspectives.

Possible discussion points before watching the video

Ask students why Black History Month exists and what might the purpose be?

Discuss with students that Black History Month is a celebration of the contribution black people have made throughout history, many of which students may not have heard of

Ask students if they are aware of any historical figures that have played an important part in black history

Students may not be aware that the first UK law making racial discrimination illegal didn't appear until 1965 (Race Relations Act of 1965).

Introduce key terminology, including:

- **racism:** discrimination, prejudice or antagonism against a person or people based purely on their race or ethnic group
- **equality:** making sure all people are treated fairly and have the same opportunity
- **discrimination:** treating someone unfairly because of who they are or a characteristic they have
- **stereotypes:** making a generalised or over simplified belief about people or individuals based a particular characteristic

Possible discussion questions after watching the video

Will there always be the need for a Black History Month celebration?

Why do some people still discriminate against others because of the colour of their skin?

How can we improve equality and respect for all people everywhere?

What could be done to integrate black history in schools all year round?

Activity ideas

Research pioneers: Why do you think many black pioneers chose to pursue excellence in fields where they weren't welcome? Was it just for themselves, or for something bigger?

Create a comic strip of a black hero, entrepreneur or inventor, who is not well known, tell their story, for example: [Matthew Henson](#)

Students could design a poster or banner that could be displayed during Black History Month, it could focus on an inspiring historical person or theme not covered in this assembly.

Divide the class into groups. Debate: The most important factor for changing the rights of black people was government action. Ask questions: How can institutions unintentionally disadvantage minority groups? How does a person's identity shape a person's experience? Is it enough to change laws? Why is participation important in a democracy?

Design a Black History Month celebration, event or activity that could be held in the students' own school.

The following links could be used as research or provided to students after the assembly.

[BBC Bitesize Black History Month \(KS3\)](#)

[CBBC Black History Month](#)

[BBC Bitesize Black History Month – Teacher Resources \(Secondary\)](#)

[Black History Month Magazine \(B:M\)](#)

[Black History Month – USA Site](#)

The BBC cannot be held responsible for the content or reliability of external links.

Possible assembly framework (Hall or classroom)

1. Entry

Music from a popular black music artist (current or historical) could be played.

2. Introduction

Potential starting questions:

- When is Black History Month celebrated in the UK? [Ask for responses.]
- When do you think Black History Month started? [Ask for responses.]
- What is the purpose of Black History Month? [Ask for responses.]

3. Play the video

The final words are: 'to speak out, challenge injustice, and build a fairer future together'

The duration is: 4min 41secs

4. After the video – time to talk

An opportunity to discuss pupils' responses to the film. See above.

Some initial reaction questions to the video may include:

- How many of the inspirational people outlined in this video have you heard of before?
- What barriers to equality were shown and do barriers exist today? How might stories of injustices help us to understand our rights and responsibilities today? What forms of activism were shown, how effective were they?
- How can you support Black History Month, and not just during October?
- How have attitudes changed towards the black community that you saw in the film, what evidence supports this?

5. Closing the assembly

Some reflections on Black History Month and the need to support any people that feel hate and intolerance in the 21st Century. [These questions should be considered by teachers before the assembly.]

- Would you support a Black History Month event? [Ask for responses.]
- Inspirational black people in this video include campaigners, musicians, nurses, journalists and police officers. Are there any professions that you feel are under-represented by black people? [Ask for responses.]
- Also what black activists, writers, inventors have you heard of? How can social media support positive change? How can we challenge racism when we see it? [Ask for responses.]
- A moment of quiet reflection could be added, if appropriate.

6. Music

You could play suitable music as pupils leave in silence.