

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

How Black History Month originated

Black History Month was originally the idea of Carter G Woodson, who worked tirelessly to promote black history in schools. In 1926 he launched the first Black History Week, set in February to coincide with the births of former President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Both men played a significant role in helping to end slavery.

Celebrating Black British history?

The first Black History Month in the UK took place in 1987, the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean. It was arranged by Akyaba Addai-Sebo, who came to the UK from Ghana as a refugee in 1984. Like Woodson before him, he wanted to challenge racism and celebrate the history of black people.

People from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been a fundamental part of British history for centuries; celebrating Black British history recognises this by providing an opportunity to acknowledge the significant contributions made by black individuals to various fields, including politics, science, sports, arts and civil rights. It also recognises the hardship that racial inequality and discrimination has caused, which still exists in today's society.



What is Black History Month?

- In the UK, Black History Month happens every October.
- It gives everyone the opportunity to share, celebrate and understand the impact of black heritage and culture.

Why is it so important to us?

For many children in the UK, this month is the only time of the year they will learn about black history. Schools in England are not currently required to teach any black history. Wales became the first nation in the UK to introduce mandatory changes to its curriculum in 2022, including lessons about black history, racism and contributions of figures from black, Asian and other ethnic minorities.

In 2023, The Guardian reported that 'Half of Britons can't name a Black historical figure', and only 7% could name more than four. This emphasises the need for us to continue being educated on black history.



How can I contribute?

- Partake in the research task set by Mrs Ha on Firefly to be awarded achievement points and prizes.
- Attend the school assembly on 30th September on Black History Month.
- Visit the school library and take out books on Black British History.
- Use the Hungry for More Scheme on Black History Month.
- Read the Friday mailing.
- Enjoy the BHM workshops for Years 7-9 and the Sixth Form on African story telling, African drumming and South African gumboot dancing on the 2nd, 9th and 16th of October 2024.



SOME OF OUR
CHANGEMAKERS YOU MAY LIKE
TO RESEARCH THIS MONTH:

Literature

Malika Booker

Patricia Cymber

Arts

Malorie Blackman

Mary Seacole

Organisations like The Black Curriculum are working hard all year round to combat the lack of Black British history in the UK curriculum. They are doing this through campaigning and delivering black history programmes. However, Black History month offers us the opportunity to truly focus in depth on the individuals and events that would not be included in a racially inclusive national curriculum

This year's theme: reclaiming narratives

About this theme

Greater attention has been paid to the importance of the Windrush generation and the Black Lives Matter movement in recent years, especially since the 2020 death of unarmed African American man George Floyd. This year's theme, however, is about reclaiming narratives, which aims to recapture forgotten stories and recognise not only the ongoing fight for equality but the achievements of the Black community.

The theme underscores a commitment to correcting historical inaccuracies and showcasing the untold success stories and the full complexity of Black heritage. It's about taking control of our stories and honouring our heroes while challenging the narratives that have often overlooked the contributions and achievements of Black individuals both in the UK and globally.

Why choose this theme?

The journey of reclaiming narratives is not just a theme for Black History Month; it's a movement towards acknowledging and appreciating the myriad contributions of Black individuals throughout history.

One of the most exciting aspects of Reclaiming Narratives is its potential to inspire and educate the next generation through inspiring stories previously unheard of. In schools, universities, and cultural institutions, this theme offers a fresh perspective on Black history which appreciates Black excellence in all its forms — whether in the arts, sciences, politics, or everyday life.

