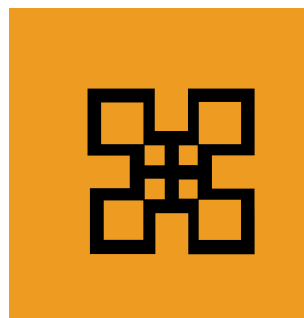
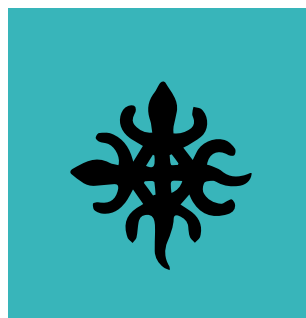
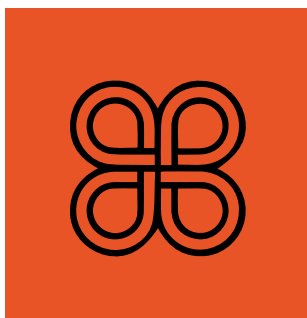
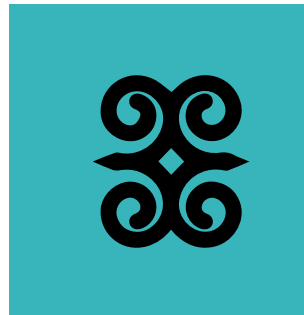
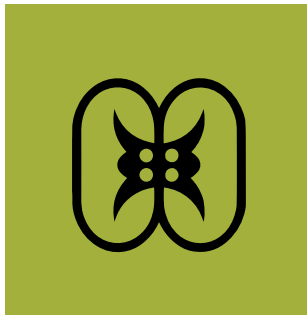


I Am Because We Are

A Grades 6 to 9 Learning Resource about Black Canadians

Teacher's Guide



Contents

Introduction.....	1
Ubuntu Philosophy.....	16
Black Joy	19
African Diaspora	26
Heroes and Rebellions.....	30
Erasure	33
Black Identity.....	45
Black Excellence.....	51
Appendix A: B.C. Curriculum Alignment.....	57
Appendix B: Resources in Africa	61
Appendix C : Ancient African Empires	62
Appendix D: Jan Van Riebeeck (1619 to 1677)	65
Appendix E: Addressing the N Word	65
Appendix F: Quotations on Excellence	67
Appendix G: Jackie Shane Biography	69
Appendix H: Where was I?	70
References	81

Introduction

Dear Educator,

In 2023, the B.C. government released the publication, *Anti-Racism Together: A K-12 Action Plan*. The purpose of this document was to indicate current and upcoming action by the Ministry of Education and Child Care to support teachers in developing anti-racist praxis and to transform the B.C. public education system. Anti-racist education provides students with the necessary skills to challenge oppression and eliminate domination (Azzahrawi, 2023). This resource is one tool to support this transformative work.

The resource is framed around Ubuntu Principles. The connection between B.C. curriculum and these principles will be highlighted throughout the guide. Supports for instruction include:

- Background information
- Vocabulary definitions
- Lesson prompts for students
- Games
- Extension activities

We see this guide as a powerful starting point for all teachers, from those who have little to no experience teaching anti-racism, to those who have experienced racism themselves.

The invention of race to classify, organize and justify the oppression of some humans over others during the enlightenment era has and continues to situate dark-skinned people, at the opposite end of power and privilege and all that is defined as good, worthy and human (Mensah, 2010). The arc of history demonstrates this through colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. In Canada, this is made evident through the forced displacement and assimilation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and immigration laws that impeded racialized people from being full participants in Canadian society. Systems, institutions, and individual racist beliefs result in unfair disadvantages for Black and Indigenous people and other racialized people. Specifically, policies, behaviours and beliefs that dehumanize and marginalize Black people, are classified as **anti-Black racism**.

As an educator, you are uniquely positioned to disrupt and reconstruct through your pedagogy, praxis, and relationships with your students. **You can choose to be anti-racist.** An anti-racist is a person who, through their actions and ideas supports anti-racist policy (Kendi, 2019). By engaging with this resource, thinking critically, teaching the lessons found in this resource and going beyond, you are engaging in anti-racist praxis.

Teaching Black history with an anti-racism lens means infusing joy into the content and not focusing exclusively on the victimization and oppression of Black people. When teaching history, educators tend to focus on instances of harm. For example, they may focus exclusively on Residential Schools when teaching Indigenous-Canadian history,

or may focus on enslavement when teaching Black history. While these histories are important, it is equally important to share stories of joy, resistance and love.

Black history is rich with resilience, joy, and agency. When a society marginalizes Black and Brown people, Black Joy becomes a powerful tool for reclaiming dignity and countering negative narratives. Black Joy is not about denying hardship; it affirms that Black people are not only survivors but creators of change and hope. It resists the idea that injustice and prejudice are normal or acceptable.

It is important for consistent space to be made to honour, celebrate, and centre Black Joy, in the classroom and in curriculum. Educators need to make space to understand and consider what “Black Joy” means to them personally, and their students. Expanding both our perspectives and theirs helps build a balanced, empowering approach to history; so bring in the Black Joy.

Finally, I Am Because We Are was created as part of a response to a call for a more inclusive and reflective curriculum. This call was made in particular by Black students, their families, teachers, activists and community who recognize that Black history is Canadian history, and has an integral place in our schools. The team of teachers and collaborators on this project endeavoured to do this work respectfully, and with honour to those it would serve and support.

Being anti-racist requires you to learn, unlearn and relearn (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2009). Consider starting with a viewing this video of Dr. Ibrahim Kendi’s 5 steps to being [anti-racist here](#). (Click on the X to view the video without requiring a login.)

This is courageous life-changing work (for you and your students); be steadfast in your evolution.

Sincerely,

The Educational Team

Pause for language: Race and racism

As you navigate this resource, it is important to have a working understanding of race and racism.

Race is a social and political construct demarcating difference and/or similarity between and among people(s), based on skin colour, ancestry, legal custom, group membership, human relatives, and other relational factors. Race has important material implications for power relations at the individual, institutional, systemic, structural, and environmental levels. ***Races are thus faulty and misleading non-scientific descriptors of people and groups*** (Kempf, 2024).

Racism refers to the operations of race-based inequity and inequality at various levels (for example, individual, group, system, structural, environmental) (Kempf, 2024)

About this resource

I Am Because We Are is an online learning resource for Grades 6-9 students and their teachers, based on British Columbia curriculum and informed by Ubuntu philosophy and principles. The title of this resource, I Am Because We Are, originates from that philosophy.

See the “Ubuntu Philosophy” section in this guide for more information.

Overview of the website

I am Because We Are is organized into seven (7) topics. It is recommended to teach in this order to scaffold the learning.

- Ubuntu Philosophy
- Black Joy
- African Diaspora
- Heroes and Rebellions
- Erasure
- Black Identity
- Black Excellence

Be aware

These topics were selected to explore a range of historical and current contexts. Expressions and experiences of joy, resiliency and hope are represented along with acts of oppression, slavery and injustices.

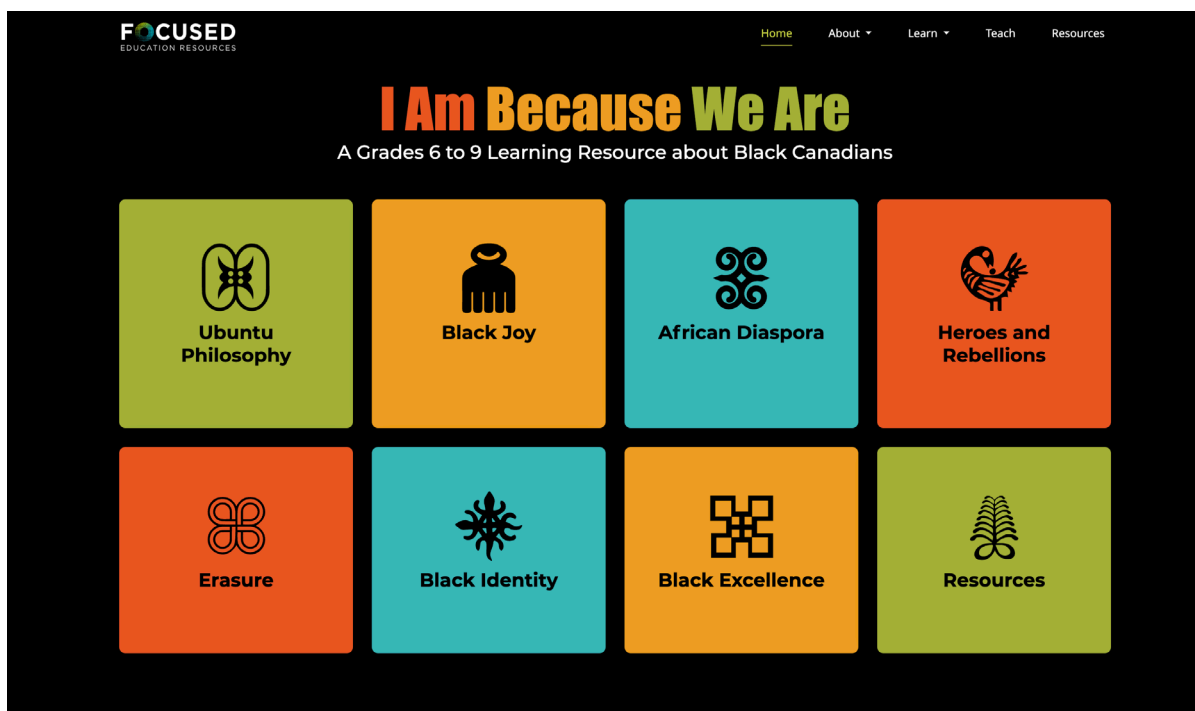
Be critically aware that:

- Situating Black Africans/Black Canadians in their agency is critical for Black students' self-perception
- Acts of resistance and heroism are grounded in strength, resilience and hope.
- Curriculum can be violent, and leaning into genocide and terror will harm students

Website format

Each topic landing page presents a brief introduction, an inquiry question and a stated learning intention that leads to additional information pages and student activities. This teacher's guide includes further activities for whole-class and individual student work.

The central image on each landing page features illustrations by various Black Canadian artists, and are intended to prompt discussion. On the left side of each landing page there is an Adinkra symbol that is associated with the topic, along with its definition and a pronunciation sound clip. Adinkra symbols originate from Ghana, though they've been popularized and, in some cases, have taken on a "pan-African" usage.



Overview of the teacher's guide

This teacher's guide was developed to accompany the I Am Because We Are web-based learning resource. It contains background information for the teacher that may also be shared with students, along with reflection and student activities related to each topic on the website. Starter prompts are provided to foster student discussion and inspire deeper questioning.

Unit structure

The beginning of each unit includes the following components:

- Learning objectives (teacher and student)
- Ubuntu principles
- First Peoples Principles of Learning

Units may include both teacher-led and student-led activities. These additional elements may also be found:

- Teacher tip
- Teacher reflection
- Student reflection
- Pause for language (highlighting definitions for important terms)

Considerations

We encourage teachers to preview this guide fully, in preparation for engaging students with the web content.

Curriculum and connections

The content of I am Because We Are is supported by two foundational pieces:

- The British Columbia student curriculum with a particular focus on the grades 6-9 Social Studies curriculum.
- The Ubuntu guiding philosophy and its related principles for understanding the world, which originate from Indigenous people in South Africa.

Throughout the teacher's guide you will see references to each of the Ubuntu principles along with connections to the British Columbia student curriculum, particularly the grades 6-9 Social Studies curriculum.

Refer to Appendix A to view curriculum alignment and identified points of connection between First Peoples Principles of Learning, the Personal and Social Core Competencies and Ubuntu philosophy and principles.

Setting the Container

Creating spaces of belonging for you and your students

Discussions about race, racism, bias and discrimination can be difficult and uncomfortable. They can be especially challenging, even painful, for racialized students and educators. Everyone comes to this learning with different lived experiences, so we cannot guarantee a safe space for all. Instead, we can create accountable spaces of belonging that provide students with the opportunity to take care of their own emotions by taking a break and/or leaving the classroom if needed. In accountable spaces, everyone is responsible for themselves, their intentions, words and actions (including their body language). Being accountable means engaging in the learning with good intentions, but also understanding that our good intentions need to match our behaviour and our actions.

Good intentions matter but they can still cause harm. Our classrooms can be respectful spaces full of positive relationships and learning, while also being spaces of harm and exclusion. These two truths can exist at the same time. As educators, being a good person is not enough. We must continue learning and unpacking our biases.

Being anti-racist requires you to learn, unlearn and relearn (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2009). This next section will support you in this process.

As an educator what does a safe space look like in practice?

Teacher reflection

Check out Dr. Ibrahim Kendi's five steps to being anti-racist here:

How to be Antiracist

<https://www.facebook.com/moveon/videos/594792391148636/>

Self-support

Why do I need to think about myself?

Speaking to any experience of harm—racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Asian hate (to name a few) is hard. It is especially hard when it is not your lived experience. Opinions and ideas offered by your students can cause you to reassess your personal beliefs, values, and experiences. Subsequently, many educators may feel varying degrees of anxiety about having complex conversations. To be proactive about this, educators prioritize safe spaces, however the prioritization of safe spaces often results in the erasure of parts of our students' identities (Aitken & Radford, 2019) because anyone who deviates from the norm of the space creates an unsafe space, and is also unsafe in the space.

Many educators are also aware that conversations around racism and oppression are necessary to support students' understanding of the world. These conversations offer rich opportunities for growth and co-construction of knowledge between yourself and your students. As a result, you and your students are better equipped to be agents of change.

To prepare for critical conversations, educators provide scaffolding to their students related to appropriate language, boundaries, and concepts that will allow them to engage deeply and respectfully. Educators need to be just as resourced for these conversations. These conversations are personal. What students share may cause you to reimagine your own beliefs and experiences. It is important to know your own boundaries before engaging in complex conversations with your students. This way you can be proactive regarding your and your students' safety, and you can maintain appropriate levels of joy and criticality.

Teacher reflection

How can you use the following section for individual or guided professional development?

Critical reflexivity

Reflective practitioners are educators who routinely reflect on their pedagogical decisions. To some degree, we are all considering the 'why' of our actions to curricular ends. Critically reflexive educators are concerned with the assumptions that underlie their actions, and the impact of their actions. By thinking critically about their assumptions and actions, critically reflexive educators can develop more collaborative, responsive and ethical ways of operating (Cunliffe, 2004).

Where to start?

Flexing your critically reflexive muscles allows you to better uphold the first B.C. Teachers' Professional Standard:

Educators value the success of all students. Educators care for students and act in their best interests.

- Educators are responsible for the physical and emotional safety of students
- Educators respect and value the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities inclusive of First Nations, Indigenous, Metis and other worldviews
- Educators engage students in meaningful participation in their own learning
- Educators treat students equitably with acceptance, dignity and respect (BC Teachers' Council, 2019)

Therefore, this section will guide you to become more aware of how your decisions impact your students' learning experience.

Pause for language: Intersectionality

Introduced by Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw, intersectionality is a theoretical framework that [...] reflects on how issues of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and ableism interact with each other, and can lead to systemic marginalization and discrimination. Intersectionality is a theory, method, and tool from critical race theory and Black feminist thought. When meaningfully implemented, intersectionality addresses privilege and oppression.

Before you begin

The creators of this resource recommend reviewing all of the content on the I Am Because We Are website, and all of the unit plans from this teacher's guide before using them.

Consider your audience—are there students in your class who may struggle with this material, for whatever reasons? What adaptations can you make to maximize student learning and success?

Have a code of conduct, class rules, or rules of engagement been discussed and established in your class? How might those supports inform instruction related to unit content?

Consider the topic, “Addressing the N Word” in the Black Identity section, as well as “Appendix E: Addressing the N word” at the end of this guide. How will you introduce this material to your students?

Review and respond to the “Preparing for difficult conversations” prompts on the next page to apply critical reflexivity to teaching content from the I Am Because We Are website.

Preparing for difficult conversations

With critical reflexivity as the framework, consider the following questions (inspired from a care plan for honest history and difficult conversations):

1. How will these conversations impact your well-being?

- Consider your intersections, emotional state, and fatigue level. All of these will impact your ability to facilitate the activity.

2. What is the purpose of this activity/discussion?

- What is the ideal end goal?

3. What are the parameters of this activity?

- Where are your “emergency exits”? How will you keep the conversation on track if it gets derailed?
- Does your class have a community agreement / classroom contract? Is one necessary?
- How will the activity end?

Curious to know more? Consult the following link:

A Care Plan for Honest History and Difficult Conversations

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Learning for Justice

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2022/a-care-plan-for-honest-history-and-difficult-conversations>

Ubuntu philosophy and principles

Ubuntu is a philosophy for understanding the world that originates from Indigenous people in South Africa. The word Ubuntu is derived from 'umuntu,' which means human being in several southern African languages (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele). Although Ubuntu has not been distilled down to one word, it encapsulates humanity, compassion, respect, dignity, and mutual caring (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Others have asserted that Ubuntu symbolizes "the fundamental essence of existence" (Tschaep, 2013).

Ubuntu principles of Solidarity, Coexistence, Compassion, and Respect and Dignity are used to guide relationships and decision making (Adwale, 2023).

Like The First Peoples Principles of Learning, Ubuntu principles are suitable to apply to the learning context. Black and Indigenous students, both in Canada and across the world, suffer loss of connection to culture and identity due to Eurocentric and colonial curriculum and teaching methods (Adwale, 2023, Ngubane & Makua, 2021, Schellnert et al., 2022). Specifically, this loss of connection occurs through the dismissal of traditional knowledge systems (Schellnert et al., 2022).

Ubuntu principles are utilized as a framework for this project, enabling Black students to engage in a methodology rooted in African indigeneity. This approach also helps all students recognize the existence of traditional knowledge systems within the African community. As educators using this resource, you are invited to lean into Ubuntu pedagogy as a means to affirm, uplift, and validate your students (Ngubane & Makua, 2021).

Prior to introducing the Ubuntu philosophy to students, it is important to take the time to reflect on each Ubuntu principle, adapt your lessons to support your students' lived experiences, and make them relevant to your students. The teacher reflections are provided as starting points for your thinking. Student reflections are provided throughout the instructional section of this guide.

Read the explanatory text for each of the Ubuntu principles listed below, and work through the accompanying teacher reflections.



Solidarity

Solidarity in this framework means that community members are in service of others and abandon exclusively being of service to themselves. Community members take actions that support the betterment of themselves and others. Solidarity opposes selfishness.

Teacher reflection

- What does solidarity in action mean to you? Examples may include volunteering, donating to a charity in the community, defending a victim of bullying, participating in neighborhood watch, taking action on issues (environmental, racial equality), etc.
- Why do you participate as a community member in service of others?
- How will you explain solidarity to students with no experience of it?



Coexistence

Coexistence refers to the ability to live in harmony with others. It recognizes the interdependence that exists within communities and relies on cooperation, valuing diverse ideas, and working towards shared goals.

Teacher reflection

- What is required to co-exist in harmony?
- How might an individual's experience or perspective affect their approach to co-existence?
- What are some of the factors that might affect one's ability to co-exist?



Compassion

Viewed as the most important principle of Ubuntu philosophy, compassion is defined as a sense of care, sympathy and concern for others. This means showing kindness and sharing what you can with others. Compassion is often summarized in the phrase “I cannot have all while you have nothing, let us share” (Ngubane & Makua, 2021).

Teacher reflection

- What does the phrase “I cannot have all while you have nothing...” mean to you?
- Identify some examples of compassion you have witnessed in your own community.
- Are there levels of compassion? Is everyone capable of showing compassion? Explore.
- Watch the following TED Talk by Clint Smith:
The Danger of Silence
https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence?subtitle=en
- What parts of this video resonated with you? How might it inform your discussions with students?



Respect and dignity

Respect and dignity are central to Ubuntu philosophy because they create the conditions for healthy cultural climates and create the conditions for the other principles to exist. By respecting others and treating them with dignity, one can gain the respect and trust of others.

Teacher reflection

- Can respect and dignity exist apart? Must they exist together?
- Which public figures demonstrate dignity and respect? What does that look like?
- How do you want your students to feel when they learn with you? Think of some key words such as empowered, seen, valued, included, capable.
- What is one action you can take daily/weekly to contribute to that feeling?
- How can Indigenous worldviews (First Peoples Principles, Ubuntu or other) support your goal?



Ubuntu Philosophy

Big ideas

Ubuntu philosophy is an expression of African worldview and community.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Describe Ubuntu philosophy and principles to students

Students will:

- Recognize the importance of Ubuntu philosophy to African worldview

Ubuntu principles

This section is an exploration of all four Ubuntu principles: solidarity, coexistence, compassion, and respect and dignity.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors.

Introduction

Review classroom norms and practices for creating safe spaces for sharing ideas, listening, and avoiding judgement. Include reminders of strategies for students to monitor their own sense of safety and well-being.

Introduce the framework of Ubuntu philosophy as an organizing structure for the unit. For example, 'In much the same way we talk about Indigenous worldviews and perspectives when learning about First Peoples, the work we'll be doing in this unit is grounded in principles that reside in traditional knowledge systems within the African community.

Solidarity

Solidarity in this framework means community members are in service to others and abandon exclusively being of service to themselves. This means that community members take actions to support the betterment of themselves and others. Solidarity opposes selfishness.

Student reflection

- What are some past examples in the world where you see solidarity?
- What are some current examples in the world where you see solidarity?
- Where in your home or school community do you see actions of solidarity?
- What should you consider before acting in solidarity?
- Why and when would you participate in an action of solidarity?

Coexistence

Coexistence refers to the ability to live in harmony with others. It recognizes the interdependence that exists within communities and relies on cooperation, valuing diverse ideas and working towards shared goals.

Student reflection

- Identify examples of co-existence in your community and in the world.
- Discover co-existence organizations around the world, such as:
7 Inspiring Examples of Coexistence in Action from Around the World.
<https://www.coexistwithpeace.com/coexistence-in-action/>

You may also highlight the Tostan Community Empowerment Program (West and East Africa) as a specific example.

Compassion

Viewed as the most important principle of Ubuntu philosophy, it is defined as a sense of care, sympathy and concern for others. This means showing kindness and sharing what you can with others, often summarized in the phrase “I cannot have all while you have nothing, let us share” (Ngubane & Makua, 2021).

Student reflection

- What does it look like when someone acts with compassion?
- What examples do you see around you (in your school...community...or the world)?
- What might cause a lack of compassion?
- What might motivate acting with compassion?

Respect and dignity

Respect and dignity are central to Ubuntu philosophy because they create the conditions for healthy cultural climates, and create the conditions for the other principles to exist. By respecting others and treating them with dignity, one can gain the respect and trust of others.

Student reflection

- Define the concepts of dignity, respect, trust, safety, etc.
- Identify examples where these are illustrated in your life, school, community, the world.
- Which public figures exemplify dignity and respect, and why?



Black Joy

Black Joy is the happiness and pride that comes from being part of Black culture, and celebrating it. It shows up in the ways Black people create music, art, dance, and traditions that bring people together, and make life beautiful. Black Joy also comes from Black excellence—the amazing contributions, achievements, and positive changes Black people have made throughout history and today. It’s about strength, love, and finding moments to laugh, play, and feel proud of who you are, even in hard times. Black Joy helps people stay resilient and strong against the unfair treatment and challenges Black communities often face, reminding everyone that happiness, connection, and pride are powerful tools for hope and change.

Big ideas

Black Joy is an expression of Black humanity and is a manifestation of resistance and perseverance.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Explain that Black Canadians’ experiences and history contain stories of joy, along with those of resistance and resilience.

Students will:

- Understand that Black history and experience is many-faceted
- Recognize that everyone's joy is unique and equally important
- Understand that celebration and joy can be acts of resistance

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principles of respect and dignity.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors.

Embedding Black joy in teaching practice

As we teach Black history, we must share stories of triumph, joy, and success, alongside the harsh truths of injustice. In doing so, we offer students a fuller understanding and vision of what is possible. The following is an iterative self-reflection to measure how you are embedding Black joy into your practice.

Defining Black joy:

- What does Black joy mean to you now?
- Why is it important?
- How does the idea of Black joy help you understand the experiences of other marginalized groups?

Cultivating joy and liberation through classroom culture:

- How are we creating spaces of belonging for students to feel they can be their true authentic selves and share their stories?
- What is the role of joy in your classroom?

Joy as resistance in the curriculum:

- What are the ways in which we already meaningfully integrate joy as resistance into the curriculum?
- What are ways in which we can do more to meaningfully integrate joy as resistance into the curriculum?
- How can the lessons provided in this teacher's guide support this goal?
- How can you let students' take the lead in creating learning opportunities where joy is centered?

Our community has learned that even the darkest depths of human evil cannot snuff out our experience of joy, of laughter and love, of good food and good conversation, of family legacy and hope for the future, of creative endeavor and the pursuit of justice. The joy of Blackness persists. Our joy is in having loved and been loved well. Our joy is in the ties that bind us to one another. Our joy is in the legacy of all that our ancestors have done for us. Our joy is in being able to participate in that legacy now. Our joy is in the taste of freedom, regardless of whether we got only a morsel of the whole pie. Our joy is in a shared language. A shared dance, a shared game, a shared song - our joy is in having left a mark in the world, being able to say, I was here.

—Austin Channing Brown

Joy is an act of resistance.

—Toi Derricotte

Teacher-led activity

Lead a brainstorming session. This may be a small group or whole class brainstorm. Choose how/where ideas will be recorded.

- What is joy? How would you describe it? How do you know when you're experiencing it?
- What brings 'joy' to you? To others? (Examples include celebrating achievements; pride in community; family traditions/gatherings; time in nature; creative experiences; helping others; overcoming challenges; being with people you enjoy).

Student activity

Black Joy is about celebrating pride, culture, and community. Select one of these prompts for a journal response.

1. How do you think celebrating your culture or community can bring joy to others?
2. Who is someone in your life or community who spreads joy to others? Write about what they do, and how it inspires you.
3. Why do you think it's important to find joy even during hard times? How can joy help people stay strong?
4. Create a joy-filled future! Imagine a world where everyone can experience joy every day. What would that world look like? How would people treat each other?

Student activity

Emphasize how Black Joy in music continues to inspire people worldwide. Provide students with listening examples and time to listen/reflect on the song's connection to joy.

Have students identify one school-appropriate song, written or composed by a Black artist that evokes joy for them. Create a class playlist.

Then have students reflect on the following related to their song choice.

- What about your song made you feel happy, empowered, strong?
- What emotions do you think the artist wanted to share?
- How do you think music can show joy and bring people together?

Student activity

- Create an artistic representation of what brings you joy.
- Digital Creation: Students can use a drawing app or online tool to design a digital representation.
- Include a short written explanation (2-3 sentences): “What did you choose to show in your art, and why does it bring you joy?”

Race and racism

Why is it so important to acknowledge joy? Recognizing and celebrating moments of joy or celebrating experiences can be a way to bring strength and resilience when faced with oppression or barriers.

This next section focuses on the reality of racism and its effects on Black peoples.

Teacher tip

Racism impacts the mind, heart and body. Prepare yourself to engage thoughtfully and with care on topics addressing honest history. Remember, being critical of dominant white culture does not mean being critical of white people, but rather being critical of the relationship between whiteness and power.

Pause for language: Race

Race is a social construct with no biological validity and is used to classify and categorize people into hierarchies, where whiteness is viewed as the ideal.

Introduction to racism

Teacher tip

Unpacking race and racism should be several lessons and can be a year long inquiry. You may have already laid the foundation in previous lessons with your students. However, if you are starting the dialogue for the first time, start small.

Review terms related to racism from this guide for your own understanding.

Consider your students, be aware of, and edit questions as appropriate.

Preview videos and select for your students.

Teacher-led activity

- As a class, watch two of the videos below
- Ask students to listen to pay attention to how the words racism and microaggression are used / defined.
- After viewing, in small groups have students share their understanding of these words.
- Discuss as a class the definition of racism and microaggression to ensure accurate understanding.
- Share videos:

History of Racism in Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFnbadzUgOk>

How do you respond to microaggressions?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3LFB4mJ0DI>

How to change systemic racism in Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-xAloD75dQ>

Teenagers Discuss Microaggressions and Racism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RfwnibEd3A>

- Review and correct misconceptions.

Teacher-led activity

- View I am Because We Are webpage in Black Joy unit
<https://mytrainingbc.ca/focuseded-iabwa/content/2/s2-002.html>
- Whole class – create a definition of racism.
- Share this definition

Pause for language: Racism

Racism is the idea that one group is naturally better than another (based on real or perceived physical traits and relationships), and creates rules and cultural values to ensure that one group retains their position as “best.”

Racism means that policies and systems exist that favour one group over another. It also creates cultural beliefs and values that uphold the systems and policies in place.

When we give some groups, some races, more power, access, and privilege over others, it becomes a problem. What does this look like? When some groups have more money than others, better education, or the right to govern a state or territory or other groups. Categorization based on race allows for racism to occur. The invention of race put people into categories, so that Black people and people close to blackness could be treated as inferior.

Suggested for grades 8 and 9:

The harm caused by racism can be understood at four different levels:

1. The **individual level**, where a person harms another person based on their real or perceived race, on purpose
2. The **institutional level**, whereby design the rules and policies of an institution (for example, a school or hospital) create unequal outcomes for certain people based on their race
3. **Systemic racism** is when racism in one institution flows through to another (for example, institutional racism in schools; which results in low graduation rates for Indigenous and Black students, which results in decreased enrollment in post-secondary education for Indigenous and Black students)
4. **Structural racism** is a system where policies, institutions, cultures and norms work together to maintain racial inequity by reinforcing white privilege and disadvantaging racialized people

(Menendian, 2023)

Teacher: Because of race and racism, we can understand white supremacy and white privilege.

When white Europeans began to settle in the Americas, there were far fewer Europeans than there were Africans, and the Europeans were divided based on nationality. To retain power over the enslaved population, the “white race” was created. This unified the

Italians, French, British and so on as one group with a common interest of remaining at the top of the social hierarchy.

As this began, in Europe, we saw publications in the Enlightenment period (17th to 18th century) affirming “natural law,” where white people were assumed to be naturally smarter, more capable, and more human than others (Genome.gov, n.d.). This idea allowed for white supremacy to exist. In its simplest form, white supremacy means that whiteness is superior to all other forms of being. Africans and blackness are situated at the opposite end of this spectrum, and therefore Black people are viewed as the least smart, the least capable and the least human. These ideas were used to justify the conquest of Africa and the enslavement of African people as well as the displacement of Indigenous populations across the world and the indentured labour of racialized bodies.

What this tells us is that even though race is an invented concept, it causes real harm for people.



African Diaspora

Big ideas

Understanding the placement and displacement of Black people is critical to understanding the erasure and resilience of Black identities.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Explain forced immigration as it relates to Black Canadians

Students will:

- Understand that Black Canadians are part of Canada's history, and have contributed to Canadian society

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principle of Coexistence.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships and a sense of place).

African diaspora

The forced displacement of Africans due to the transatlantic slave trade and Indian Ocean slave trade resulted in the migration and settlement patterns that occurred in the Americas and the Middle East. We see the legacy of African displacement across the world. In Canada, some Black Canadians can trace their heritage to early Black settlers who made their way to Canada to avoid anti-Black legislation and anti-Black racism in America. While Canada offered hope to these new Black settlers, many returned to the United States due to racist treatment and unequal opportunity in Canada.



Pause for language: Diaspora

Diaspora refers to the spread of people from their original homeland.

Canadian settlements

Teacher-led activity

Ask students to reflect on the term and if they can think of examples of diasporas that are relevant to them.

Refer to [Black communities in Canada](#) on the website. Here are example questions to prompt discussion.

- **Where** in Canada did people settle? **Where** did they come from? **How** did they travel to Canada?
- **When and why** did they settle in those particular places?
- **How** did their communities become established?
- **What** did they do? (What were their lives like? How did they live and work?)
- **Who** else was there, if anyone? What was the relationship like between communities?
- **Why** doesn't the community exist anymore? When did it cease to exist?

Student activity (individual or group)

- Who should know about this history?
- How will we share the new knowledge?

B.C. settlement - Victoria

Teacher-led activity

Read about Sir James Douglas's call for African-Americans to move to Victoria.
Share links for research:

Sir James Douglas

Canadian Encyclopedia entry

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sir-james-douglas>

Earliest Pioneers (1858-1899)

James Douglas

<https://bcblackhistory.ca/sir-james-douglas/>

Sir James Douglas

Douglas College website

<https://www.douglascollege.ca/about-douglas/learn-about-douglas/sir-james-douglas>

Pose questions for students to consider why and how decisions were taken by Douglas, including:

- The existing living conditions in California at the time
- What Douglas was offering
- The living and social conditions and opportunity in Victoria

Student activity

- Watch the following video, paying particular attention from 6:06 to 7:08.

James Douglas and the Colony of British Columbia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLtw8nzSU7Q>

- Consider why and how this decision was taken by Douglas, including:
 - » The existing living conditions in California at the time
 - » What Douglas was offering
 - » The living and social conditions and opportunity in Victoria
- Identify the pros/cons of settling in Victoria.
- Have students consider how they will represent their learning. Options might be:
 - » Writing a letter to encourage or dissuade settlers
 - » Designing a poster to encourage settlers
 - » Creating a rap, video, or ad to encourage settlers

Teacher-led activity

Extend the discussion. Some students in your class may have lived experience of the effects of diaspora themselves.

- What can be learned from this historical example?
- What is happening now in Canada or the world that reminds you of this time in history?
- Where are there current examples of people experiencing diaspora?



Heroes and Rebellions

Big Ideas

- Slavery and enslavement are not the same thing.
- Africans did not accept slavery and resisted in many ways

Note: Some students may hold intergenerational trauma related to these topics. Teachers are expected to make space for student whole body wellness and care as required.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Explain the difference between slavery and enslavement
- Explain anti-slavery movements in Canada

Students will:

- Know the difference between slavery and enslavement
- Understand that Black people resisted and fought against their enslavement
- Know that the displacement of Africans led to some individuals settling in Canada

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principles of Compassion and Respect and Dignity.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning is embedded in memory, history and story

Enslavement in Canada

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher tip

The following story accompanies the [Resistance to enslavement](#) section on the I Am Because We Are website, to illustrate an individual's experience and resistance efforts.

Chloe Cooley's story

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher-led activity

These questions can be posed for individual reflection or small group or class discussion.

- What was new information for you?
- What do you think the witnesses of Chloe's entrapment should have done?
- What are some of the risks and considerations with acting in a situation like this?
- How might these risks differ for individuals?

Abolitionist movements in Canada

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher tip

Abolitionists were white Canadians who provided support to resistance efforts.

Teacher-led activity

Consider the role of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada in advocating for the abolishment of slavery. Review the concepts of ally and accomplice as posted on the website.

Anti-Slavery Society of Canada

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anti-slavery-society-of-canada>

- Were abolitionists acting as allies or accomplices?

Pause for language: Ally and accomplice

An **ally** is anyone from a majority group that is working towards ending oppression by supporting and advocating for those in marginalized and oppressed groups (University of Pittsburgh Library, 2023). An ally cannot be self-appointed, rather their allyship is recognized by the groups they are seeking to support.

An **accomplice** is a person who risks their position (their power and privilege, comfort and wellbeing) to challenge the status quo.

Teacher tip

Remind students that just because a person is part of a marginalized group does not mean that they are experiencing marginalization

Teacher-led activity

Connecting to the present day

- What are some ways students have acted or can act in allyship towards marginalized groups?
- How do we make space for others who experience school differently from ourselves?

Example: Students who might feel marginalized due to:

- Celebrations they aren't able to participate in because of their cultural or religious practices
- Opportunities they aren't able to participate in because of financial barriers



Erasure

Big ideas

The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Therefore, we must bring to light all stories, people, histories and events that have been excluded from dominant narratives and curriculum.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Explain the concept of erasure and provide examples
- Build connections between Canadian history and other histories
- Explain the concept of colonization

Students will:

- Understand the concept of erasure and how it applies to African history
- Apply the concept of erasure to different historical examples
- Understand colonization in different contexts
- Apply knowledge gained from previous units to deepen their understanding of Black history

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principle of Respect and Dignity.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

What is erasure?

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

What is Black erasure?

The following lessons bring awareness to the issue of appropriation as it relates to erasure.

Teacher-led activity

Review with students the concept and definition of appropriation.

Pause for language: Appropriation

Appropriation: when a dominant culture takes and exploits something from another culture without understanding and respecting its original significance (Ealey, 2023)

Have students consider a time when they or someone they know were not acknowledged for their creative idea(s), hard work or efforts on a project, assignment, class or school initiative. Or a time when they were not acknowledged for their contributions to chores, problem solving and / or a gift.

Discussion Prompts:

- How did that lack of acknowledgement make them feel?
- How might it feel to have your accomplishments overlooked, ignored and disregarded?
- If this were to happen to you often, what might be some consequences?
- When your history is erased, how do you learn about your ancestors?
- How do we learn from what's happened in the past and how it affects our present?
- When your culture is banned, how do you see yourself? How do you belong? How do you celebrate the stories, music, food, joy and family that made you?

Ancient Africa

This section broadens students' knowledge and understanding of ancient African empires. Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher-led activity

Lead a class discussion, and record responses in a K-W-L chart. This may be done individually, as a class or in a shared digital document.

- What do we know about the continent of Africa?
- Which countries do we hear the most about and why?
- What do we know about ancient African empires?
- What do we know about African ingenuity?

Organize into small groups and provide the [Ancient African empire map](#). Invite students to share what they know about the location of current natural resources found in Africa, or have them research this topic.

Refer to the list of resources in Appendix B: Resources in Africa.

Student activity

Find a map online that locates natural resources in Africa.

- What do you notice?
- What information was new to you or a surprise?
- What connections can you make to your world?
- What are the economic implications for a country that has abundant natural resources?
- What do you wonder/want to know more about?

As a group, complete the wonder and learn sections of the K-W-L chart.

Egypt and Kush

The activities in this next section support a quick review of ancient Egypt, and then an exploration of Kush. Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic. If your students have completed ancient Egypt studies, move to the next section on African Empires.

Teacher-led activity

Refer to the World Book Student map, "[Ancient Egypt: Three periods](#)," or provide students with an alternate map of ancient Egypt that includes cities and geographical features.

Use a jigsaw strategy for students to share their research, individually or in pairs.

Student activity

- Individually or in pairs, select one of the cities or landmarks above to research.
- Summarize key facts in one or two sentence
- Students should be prepared to teach others about the significant attributes of their chosen city.

Teacher-led activity

Pose the following question and ask students to reflect in written form or guide a discussion.

- Why do you think mainstream history focuses on Egypt, and seldom acknowledges [Kush](#)? What do you think is the impact of that?

African empires

In this section, students will go beyond learning about ancient Egypt to explore other kingdoms and empires of Ancient Africa.

Teacher tip

This topic is an opportunity to review research skills, including note-taking and citations. Enlist the support of your librarian where possible. You and your students have access to World Book Pathfinders, which has organized collections of resources, with information on Ancient Egypt and other Ancient African cultures:

World Book Pathfinders

<https://www-worldbookonline-com.bc.idm.oclc.org/advanced/pathfinder>

These articles have text-to-speech feature, and Google translation available.

Teacher-led activity

Select a video to share with students and model note-taking strategies.

Starting examples. Preview for age-appropriate content.

Egypt and Other African Civilizations (rap version)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw5Y_cC98wU

Other African Kingdoms – Ancient World History for Kids!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80HmiuUACyQ>

The Ancient and Medieval African Kingdoms: A Complete Overview

This video provides chapter links and full transcript. There is a prompt to

subscribe but the videos are publicly viewable.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHJF8Gv2sxw>

Student activity

Research in groups or individually using the resources provided:

- Video links above
- Ancient African Empires fact sheet (refer to Appendix C: Ancient African Empires)

Teacher-led activity

As a class, discuss the following:

- Why do students think that the wealth of African empires is seldom discussed or taught?

Update the K-W-L chart with the new information learned.

Teacher-led activity

This lesson is for Grades 8-9. The song *I Can* by Nas references ancient African empires and touches on historical events.

Preview the lyrics prior to deciding whether to share this activity with your class. Note that copyright laws mean you cannot reproduce these lyrics in another form. Use the link provided below.

Student activity for grades 8 and 9

Display the lyrics to the song *I Can* by Nas from the following website, which has procured a license that allows the lyrics to be displayed.

I Can by Nas (SongFacts)

<https://www.songfacts.com/lyrics/nas/i-can>

Student activity

Analyze the lyrics of this verse (pair/share; small groups; whole class). Discuss and provide explanations for their responses.

- Who is telling the story? What is their perspective? Who is their audience?
- How does your experience differ when you read the lyrics or listen to them?
- Do any lines/verses surprise you?
- Does it tell the whole story? Would you add any other facts?
- Which line/verse is the most powerful?

African architecture

This section provides a high-level snapshot of ancient and contemporary African architecture. It is by no means comprehensive, and is meant to serve as a launching point for students to conduct further exploration on their own.

Ancient African architecture

In addition to the sites profiled on the I Am Because We Are website, there are many ancient mosques in particular that could also be researched, such as:

Tunisia

Great Mosque of Kairouan (7th to 9th centuries)

Great Mosque of Mahdia (10th century)

Kasbah Mosque of Tunis (13th century)

Mosque and mausoleum of Youssef Dey (17th century)

Algeria

Remains of the mosque of Qal'at Bani Mammad (11th century)

Great Mosque of Tlemcen (11th to 12th centuries)

Sidi Bu Madyan Mosque in Tlemcen (14th century)

New Mosque in Algiers (17th century)

Morocco

University of al-Qarawiyyin in Fes, founded as a mosque in the 9th century

Almoravid Qubba in Marrakesh (early 12th century)

Egypt

Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, founded in 972

Aqmar Mosque, 1126 AD

Madrassa-Mosque of Sultan Hassan (1356-1361 AD)

Contemporary African architecture

Contemporary African Architecture uses a combination of modern building materials and traditional elements from various regions of the continent. In addition to the sites featured on the I Am Because We Are website, the following structures are notable, with photographs included at the web links provided:

- [Bosjes Chapel, South Africa \(2016\)](#)
- [Hikma Complex, Niger \(2018\)](#)

- [Lideta Market, Ethiopia \(2017\)](#)
- [The Mokorotlo Building, Lesotho \(1966\)](#)

Teacher-led activity

- Determine grouping for the activity (individual, small group, whole class)
- Set the intention for the viewing/reading.
- Provide video links.

7 Mind Blowing African Architecture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEGXNSaoWzM>

Africa's iconic architecture in 12 buildings

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58855205>

- Determine how students will record their thinking. The student activity below is based on a K-W-L chart. Other options would be a T chart, Rubric or Venn Diagram. Adjust instructions to match the graphic organizer template.

Student activity

- In the K-W-L chart, list three facts you know about African architecture.
- Review the website.
- Watch one of the video links.
- Record what you noticed and learned.
- Record what you still wonder or would like to learn.
- Be prepared to share:
 - » A piece of new information or learning
 - » A structure or style you most liked and why
 - » One 'wonder'

Teacher-led activity

As a class, discuss the following:

- How could our society benefit from learning about these different architecture styles? (For example, built-in ventilation could help with rising heat in the summers).
- Why do you think we have not embraced the architectural genius that comes from Africa?

Black Canadian contributions

There are many Black British Columbians who have contributed to the province and to the nation by accomplishing great things.

Teacher-led activity

Refer to the Erasure landing page, and click on the images. How aware are you of these people? This is an opportunity to look closely at some Black British Columbians and Black Canadians and their achievements.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Canada and South Africa

The following activities will engage students to learn, reflect, develop and share their understanding about Canada and South Africa's shared connection to truth and reconciliation commissions. Each country hosted their own truth and reconciliation commission to address harms committed by oppressive governments. Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Colonization

Apartheid was one of the many consequences of colonization.

Teacher tip

Take some time to reflect on your understanding and experience of colonization prior to introducing the lesson activities to students.

Pause for language: Colonization, extractive colonialism, and settler colonialism

Colonization

Colonization is the process by which an invading country asserts domination over a territory, its resources and indigenous peoples, for the colonizers' own gain.

Extractive colonialism

Extractive colonialism occurs when members of an outside nation-state inhabit a foreign country and extract resources to send back to their home country, in order to build wealth. This outside nation-state establishes a presence in the foreign country, but does not establish a new nation-state. This is the case in many African countries and in India. With extractive colonialism, once resources have been extracted, settlers leave and leave a big mess.

Settler colonialism

Settler colonialism occurs when members of an outside nation-state destroy another country's culture(s), land, and infrastructure in order to replace it with their own. The outside nation-state eradicates what existed before its arrival and builds new structures and systems to erase and replace what was there. In the case of settler colonialism, settlers never leave.

Teacher-led activity

Whole class discussion

- What is colonization? Provide an example.

Teacher tip

This next activity focuses on Jan Van Riebeeck, a key figure in South African colonization and apartheid. Students will examine how this time in history has been represented in song by Youngsta CPT.

Teacher-led activity

Introduce the activity by sharing the biography of Jan Van Riebeeck (see Appendix D).

- Provide students with lyrics to the song YVR (Young Van Riebeeck) by Youngsta CPT, found here:

YVR – YoungstaCPT

<https://genius.com/Youngstacpt-yvr-lyrics>

- Review translations:
 - Kaapstad – Capetown
 - Mense – people
 - Stiek uit – come through
 - Bru – brother

Student activities

In pairs or small groups, analyze the lyrics.

- What lines stick out for them? Why?
- What is the message of the song? What story is being told?

Teacher-led activity

Show the YVR (Young Van Riebeeck) music video:

YoungstaCPT – YVR (Young Van Riebeeck)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_w4TQCloCA

Discuss (whole class or small group):

- How is the imagery connected to the lyrics?
- How does this song help your understanding of the consequences of colonization / Jan Van Riebeeck's presence?
- What do you think Youngsta is trying to achieve by writing a song like this? (Think of how expensive it is to produce a song and music video. Why was this important?)
- Who do you think needs to hear this song?
- How effective is this approach of using music and images, to bring historical events to present-day audiences?

Teacher tip

Preview the video to select sections to share with students, and to prepare relevant points to guide students through their assignment. For older students the second video viewing may be assigned as homework. For younger students, you may want to guide them through the process in class.

Teacher-led activity

- Review the general idea of a truth and reconciliation commission with students.
- Provide a T-chart or instruct students to create one, with the labels "Canada" and "South Africa."
- Watch the TRC Canada video as a class and fill out the "Canada" section of the chart.
- CBC news reportage on the TRC final report:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKKLgwlosaw>

Student activity

Watch the appropriate South African TRC video individually and complete the South Africa section of the T-chart.

Star any points where you need more information or are unsure and would like clarification.

Secondary Students:

Truth Justice Memory: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Process (introduction)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3taLI3moaM>

Teacher tip

At the 15:35 mark, Archbishop Desmond Tutu discusses the principles of Ubuntu and their relation to restorative justice.

Elementary Students:

Tutu and the TRC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujOL8FS2wv4>

Teacher-led activity

- Compile a class summary of points.
- Review the summary as a class, address any misunderstandings and encourage students to ask questions to ensure their understanding.
- Students share and reflect on the importance of Truth and Reconciliation commissions for those who have been harmed and for society at large.

Apartheid

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher tip

Provide students with definitions and background information on Apartheid.

Pause for language: Apartheid and Coloured

Afrikaans is one of the official languages in South Africa, of west Germanic and Dutch origin.

Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning “apartness.” South Africa’s system of apartheid was inspired by Canada’s Indian Act from 1876, specifically the reserve system. This connection is referenced in this record of the Canadian Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in 2013. (<https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/41-1/aano/meeting-64/evidence>)

Today, Black Canadians do not refer to themselves as **Coloured**. This is dead language. It is included here to reflect the legal language of the time.

Teacher-led activity

Watch this TedED video to gain understanding of anti-apartheid protests and dismantling of apartheid.

How did South African Apartheid happen, and how did it finally end?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke4kVFycpYY>

Create “Did you know.” statements about apartheid’s oppressive laws and regulations. Example statements can include:

- Inter-racial marriage was illegal
- Non-white South Africans had to carry a passbook in order to leave their neighbourhoods
- Separate education systems were created for African, Coloured and white students.
- Police had the right to detain and/or imprison African people without informing their families where they were being held.

Student activity

- Individuals, groups or whole class will review and discuss the ‘Did you Know’ statements

Teacher-led activity

Play the song “Free Nelson Mandela” (first released by The Special AKA in 1984).

The Specials – Nelson Mandela (Official Music Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgcTvoWjZJU>

- Explain how this song was banned from being played.
- Ask students to consider why music is often used to convey political opinions.
- What songs can they think of today that do the same?



Black Identity

This section explores the diversity of black identities, addresses issues of stereotyping, and supports students in exploring their own identity.

Big ideas

Black identities are multi-faceted and diverse.

Learning objectives

Teachers will:

- Explain the diverse ways people of African descent are represented and exist in the world
- Affirm that there is no one way to be Black
- Affirm that all Black experiences are unique and are valid

Students will learn:

- There are many ways in which Black people show up and present themselves in the world, and no one way is incorrect
- Stereotypes are harmful even if they seem positive

- They should not define themselves or others based on assumptions or generalizations
- How they show up is valid and they should expect to be valued for who they are

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principle of Solidarity.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning requires the exploration of one's identity.

Combatting stereotypes

Refer to the I Am Because We Are website for information on this topic.

Teacher tip

Start small, with examples relevant to your students' lived experiences. The following scenarios are provided as examples.

- One grade 6 student shows up late for basketball practice, so the coach gets mad at the whole team about being late all the time.
- The basketball team gets invited to a basketball tournament, but the coach says no because no one shows up to practice on time, so the team clearly doesn't take basketball seriously.
- Last spring a few grade 10 students were caught vaping at the Spring dance, and now all school dances have been canceled.

Teacher-led activity

Discuss the scenarios with the class.

- What did they notice about how the consequences were applied?
- What do they think about that approach?
- How might the students feel in those scenarios? (For example, a sense of injustice; anger; fear; disrespected; less likely to trust authority)

Culture

Teacher-led activity

Guide students to review the information on the Culture landing page.

Discuss the hair styling/dreadlocks example and consider:

- Whether hair styles should be policed

- Whether hair styles impact quality of work
- Connections between hair styles and identity
- What hair appropriation is

Student activity

This activity is intended for students in grades 7 to 9. The objective is to connect visible Black culture to invisible Black culture.

- Draw a tree on the board or on poster paper. Be sure to draw the roots in the ground.
- As a class, fill out the visible part of the tree with examples of Black culture that students participate in (music, food, clothing, hairstyles).
- In partners or individually (depending on how many examples you have in your tree) students will choose one example and look up its history. The history they find will be used to fill the bottom part of the tree, (for example, braids would be on the branches of the tree, but the history of cornrows would be placed on the roots).
- Students will share their learnings with the class and fill in the roots of the tree.

Addressing the N word

Your Black and non-Black students may acknowledge the N word as part of Black culture. Its use is widespread and the appropriateness of its use in the Black community is varied. Some Black people are reclaiming the word, to reclaim their power and transform the meaning of it. Other Black people are harmed by its use and do not use it at all. As the adult, you can listen to students' ideas and reinforce that the word is not to be used in any school setting.

Important: Read this background information in preparation for addressing questions/ comments from students. Refer to Appendix E: Addressing the N Word.

Black diversity

Black identity is as unique as our fingerprints. While teaching about Black culture, you may notice your Black students identify with some but not all that is deemed to be part of Black culture.

Teacher-led activity

Lead a discussion with the following prompt: Who has more influence on our identities, our families or our friends?

Teacher tip

The U-shaped Discussion strategy offers an alternative to the traditional two-sided debate:

U-shaped Discussion

https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/sssm/html/u-shapeddiscussion_sm.html

This strategy encourages students to listen and see the merits of all sides, and to recast binary options as positions along a continuum. The goal is not for students to try to convince others, but merely to explain why the position they are sitting in is the most defensible one for them. There is no need to reach consensus on the issue.

Representing self-identity through art

Teacher-led activity

Explain the meaning of symbolism to students. The artist [Mallarmé](#) explained in a letter, the idea behind symbolism was, “to paint not the thing but the effect it produces.”

- Show examples of [symbolist art](#).
- Discuss examples with students. What feelings are evoked? Was it well done? Why? Why not?

Student activity

- Reflect on your own identity.
- Draw or write your responses to any of the questions that follow on a sheet of paper
 - » What defines me?
 - » How do people see me?
 - » How do I want to be seen?
 - » Who am I?
- Using your notes as a guide, create a presentation that symbolizes who you are using any form of drawing, collage, sculpture, photography, dance, music, video, etc.

Teacher-led activity

Gallery walk and discussion:

- Display student art in the classroom and allow students time to appreciate the work of their peers.
- Discuss the differences between symbols chosen by students. Connect this to the idea that despite grouping and stereotyping, no identity is the same. Refer to the discussion on Black identity to support and anchor the conversation.
 - » Use this opportunity to loop back to unfinished ideas from previous conversations.
 - » Ask students why it is important to see yourself / reflect on who you are in a positive light.

Afrofuturism

Afrofuturism is a genre that centres Black history and culture through storytelling, music and visual arts. Afrofuturism is important because it is a way for Black people to see themselves in their agency and brilliance.

Pause for language: Afrofuturism

Afrofuturism is a cultural movement that blends African culture with technology and science fiction. It imagines a future where African people and their descendants thrive, using advanced technology and exploring space.

This movement appears in books, movies, music, and art, showing powerful and positive images of Black people. It often mixes traditional African elements with futuristic ideas, creating unique and imaginative worlds. Afrofuturism helps people think about the future in new ways and celebrates African heritage and creativity. It's a way to dream about a better, more inclusive future for everyone.

Teacher-led activity

Gather resources for students to explore, including the Afrofuturism landing page and additional articles, images, music or digital/print texts.

View the Afrofuturism landing page together.

- What are some examples in present culture where you see Afrofuturism represented? (For example, the Black Panther movie)

Student activity

Individually or in pairs, select 2-3 of the provided resources to explore.

Record:

- Something you learned
- What you wonder
- Where you've seen something similar

Share – class discussion of observations and questions.

Comic / graphic narrative project

Teacher tip

This project stems from the Afrofuturism lesson. It is essential that both the Resistance to Enslavement lesson in the Heroes and Rebellions unit and the Afrofuturism lesson in the Black Identity unit are taught prior to this project.

Teacher-led activity

Refer students to the Enslavement page in the Heroes and Rebellions unit to review the list of heroes and rebellions. The task is to reimagine a hero or slave rebellion through an Afrofuturist lens, by assigning fantastic or supernatural powers to the main actors / events.

Student activity

Grades 6 and 7

1. In partners, select a hero or rebellion of the enslavement era.
2. List five to six major moments of the event or individual in question.
3. Think about the main actors and determine what supernatural power, technology or ability you would like to give them to help them resist or rebel.
4. Determine how this ability/power would change the outcome of the event.
5. Draw a storyline and plot the new event.
6. On one page, create an 8-panel grid for your story.

Grades 8 and 9

Decide if you would like to work alone or with a partner.

Select a hero or rebellion from the enslavement era or a person / rebellion / event from a contemporary area, (for example, the Algerian War for Independence, Black Lives Matter movement).

1. Do your research.
2. Create a storyline, characters and title.
3. Draft your graphic narrative with images and text.
4. Decide how you would like to present your final draft, (for example, using text, visuals, video, sound).
5. Create your final draft.



Black Excellence

Excellence is inclusive; it knows no racial boundaries. Talent, ambition and determination are not confined to certain groups of people. Black excellence is not about being perfect, and it is multi-dimensional. It is about cultivating an environment where everyone's diverse talents are acknowledged and celebrated, and where individuals are provided with opportunities to flourish. Exploring Black excellence sends the powerful message that success is attainable for all, regardless of race or background.

Representation matters. When students see accomplished artists, educators, athletes, scientists and other professionals who look like them, they are more likely to envision their own potential and pursue ambitious goals. Role models who have broken down barriers and overcome obstacles demonstrate possibilities and can instill confidence in students.

Big ideas

Black excellence is achieving success while maintaining dignity and integrity.

Learning objectives

The teacher will:

- Understand the meaning of Black excellence

- Adopt an intersectional lens to teaching Black excellence, so that students may see themselves reflected
- Encourage students to adopt an 'excellence' mindset for themselves

Students will:

- Understand the meaning of Black excellence
- Reflect on how they can be excellent and take steps towards that achieving that goal

Ubuntu principles

This section is connected to the Ubuntu principle of Respect and Dignity

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning ultimately supports the wellbeing of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Black resistance, love, and joy

Many attempts at teaching Black history centre around trauma. It is important to provide a fuller exploration of the Black experience. When teaching history, educators tend to focus on instances of harm. For example, they may focus exclusively on Residential Schools when teaching Indigenous-Canadian history, or may focus on slavery when teaching Black history. While these histories are important, it is equally important to share stories of joy, resistance and love. Refer to the article, [Black History Month: Teaching the Complete History](#) published in Learning for Justice, where educator Coshandra Dillard speaks to the power of teaching joy and love.

Teacher tip

Remember, excellence is inclusive; it knows no racial boundaries. Talent, ambition and determination are not confined to certain groups. Black excellence is not about being perfect or the best. Black excellence has many layers and is multi-dimensional. It is more about celebrating resilience, effort and contributions than narrowly focusing on the results generated.

Black excellence and erasure

Explain that one of the reasons people learn about and celebrate Black excellence is because, due to racial bias and discrimination, Black achievements, contributions and success for centuries have not been acknowledged, uplifted or taught. Racism has prevented us from learning about many remarkable Black Canadians.

Under adverse or harsh circumstances such as racist laws, segregation, racial discrimination, hindrances, restrictions and poverty, many seemingly "regular" achievements are remarkable.

The attempt to silence Black voices and achievements is addressed in greater detail in the Erasure and Heroes and Rebellions sections of this teacher's guide and the I Am Because We Are website.

Teacher-led activity

Have students reflect on the definition of Black excellence. Regardless of being Black, how can the key ideas apply to their lives? What does excellence, look like, feel like, and sound like?

Have students collaboratively create their definitions of excellence.

<p>Excellence is:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Provide three or four examples of Black excellence from the past and present to share with the class—short biographies, picture books and/or videos that demonstrate Black excellence.

These might be of an individual, a group of people or an organization.

After sharing these examples, invite students to now add to or revise their definitions of excellence.

Create a gallery walk with quotations on “excellence.” Refer to Appendix F: Quotations on Black Excellence.

In groups, have students walk the gallery and select the quotation that best supports/relates to their definition of excellence.

- Take their selection off the wall
- Add the name of the person who is quoted and what ‘field’ they represent, (such as science, arts, philanthropy).

Teacher tip

Do not limit examples of Black excellence to athletes and performers—this is an opportunity to broaden students’ understanding of Black Canadian contributions and achievements.

Black Canadian contributions

Teacher-led activity

Review the people featured in the [Black Excellence section introduction](#).

Student activity

- Choose a person, place, or event that students would like to learn about.
- Have students share their person / place / event’s success through a creative art form (painting, poem, dance, collage, song, paper maché, video, letter of gratitude).

Students will present their pieces in an in-person “Museum of Black Excellence” to which other classes could be invited for a gallery walk.

Living excellently

Teacher-led activity

Share the story of Jackie Shane with your students. See Appendix G: Jackie Shane Biography and refer to the “Queer Terminology from A to Q” document for definitions:

Queer Terminology from A to Q

https://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Queer-Glossary_2022_Digital.pdf

Show the Canada heritage minute:

Heritage Minutes: Jackie Shane

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRUjX3_f22k

Discussion prompt: In what ways is Jackie Shane an example of Black excellence?

Student activity

Gr. 6 / 7:

Reflect on one aspect of who you are that you are unapologetically proud of. This might be a skill, or it might be a trait, like being kind/compassionate; being responsible/helpful.

Choose one of the following:

- Write a journal entry on your best trait or characteristic.
 - » Give an example of your chosen quality/skill

- » Explain why you are proud of it
- Draw a portrait of yourself that emphasizes your best trait or characteristic

Teacher-led activity

Gr. 8 / 9:

Lead a class discussion around belonging. It wasn't easy for Jackie to be herself, and it is not easy for students to be themselves in schools.

- Why is it everyone's responsibility to ensure that everyone in school feels like they belong?
- What is the meaning of integrity?
- What are actions that foster belonging?
 - » What can you do?
 - » How will you do it?

Teacher tip

Share with students that integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching / will find out.

- How does integrity play into creating an environment that centres on belonging?
- How can you challenge yourself to act with integrity and to foster belonging?

Extension activity: Interview an Elder, parent, guardian, or family friend

Students select an Elder, parent, guardian or family friend to interview, and record the responses.

- What were they taught about excellence when they were children?
- What were they told it looked like?
- In what ways did their definition and understanding of excellence change over their lifetime?

Teacher-led activity

1. Have students take a sheet of paper and add the title "Excellence" at the top.
2. Using highlighters or coloured felts/pencils, students select three to five important points from their interview.
3. In small groups, students share their findings with each other to identify similarities and differences.

Discussion prompt: What stood out for your group? What did you notice?

Paragraph response: Do you believe that people's definitions and understanding of what represents excellence is changing? Why? Explain. Has your understanding of excellence changed? If so, how?

Unit summary

Black history is all Canadians' history. It teaches us about important achievements and contributions that Black Canadians have made, many of which we all benefit from. It teaches us about resilience and how remarkable excellence is in the face of challenges and adversity.

Teacher-led activity

Assign

1. Why do we celebrate Black history in Canada? How is it important to everyone?

Appendix A: B.C. Curriculum Alignment

The following curricular competencies have been identified as supported by the lesson content within the I Am Because We Are resource and Teacher's Guide.

Social Studies

Grade 6

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
- Construct arguments defending the significance of individuals/groups, places, events, or developments (significance).
- Differentiate between short- and long-term causes, and intended and unintended consequences, of events, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence).

Grade 7

- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places (significance)
- Characterize different time periods in history, including periods of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that marked periods of change (continuity and change)
- Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events, and compare the values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places (perspective)

Grade 8

- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places (significance)
- Characterize different time periods in history, including periods of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that mark periods of change (continuity and change)
- Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events, and compare the values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places (perspective)

Grade 9

- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their historical significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance)

- Assess how prevailing conditions and the actions of individuals or groups affect events, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence)
- Recognize implicit and explicit ethical judgments in a variety of sources (ethical judgment)

Arts Education

Grades 6–7

- Develop and refine ideas, processes, and technical skills in a variety of art forms
- Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions
- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas and experiences
- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts
- Explore a range of cultures, and the relationships among cultures, societies, and the arts
- Examine relationships between the arts and the wider world

Grade 8

- Develop, refine ideas, and critically appraise ideas, processes, and technical skills in a variety of art forms
- Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' motivations and meaning
- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas and experiences
- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through arts activities and experiences

Grade 9

- Compose, interpret, and expand ideas using symbolism, imagery, and elements.
- Reflect on works of art and creative processes to make connections to personal learning and experiences.
- Take creative risks to experience and express thoughts, emotions, ideas, and meaning.
- Create personally meaningful bodies of artistic works that demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of social, cultural, environmental, and historical contexts.
- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through arts activities and experiences

First Peoples Principles of Learning and Ubuntu Philosophy

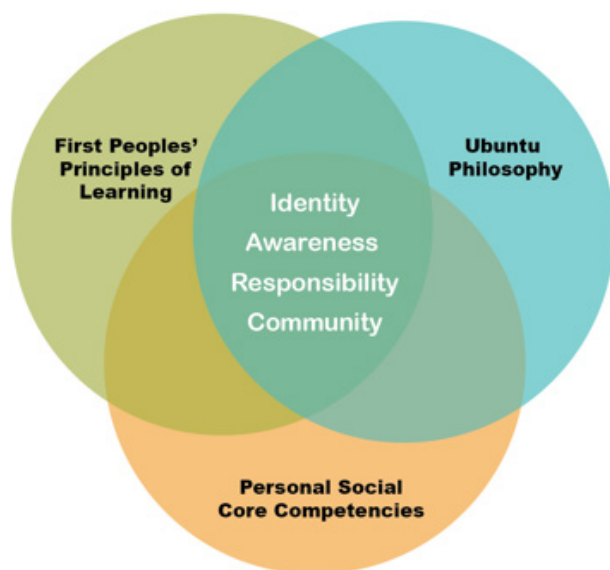
As we centre and uplift Indigenous worldviews, it becomes evident how Ubuntu philosophy and the First Peoples' Principles of Learning are connected. Ubuntu philosophy results in the wellbeing of self, family, community, land, spirits, and ancestors. It involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions, understanding roles and responsibilities, and overall prioritizes the role of Indigenous knowledge. Connecting Ubuntu philosophy with First Peoples' Principles of Learning will show your learners the commonalities that exist between Indigenous groups. More importantly, it can nurture a sense of community between Indigenous and Black youth.

Core Competencies, Ubuntu Principles and First Peoples Principles of Learning

The Personal and Social core competency is embedded within Ubuntu principles. Solidarity and coexistence require a student to reflect on their needs and the needs of others. To successfully exist in a learning environment, the decisions made in the classroom must support their learning but not inhibit the learning of others. Students who are personally aware and take responsibility for their actions are individuals who "demonstrate self-respect..." and "...understand that there are consequences for their actions" (B.C., 2016). This quality aligns with the First Peoples Principle, "Learning involves recognizing there are consequences for our actions" (First Nations Education Steering Committee, n.d.).

The second tenet of the Personal and Social competency states, "Positive personal and cultural Identity promotes self-awareness, self-worth and the ability to confidently take satisfaction in what they have achieved and their potential. This positive self-perception contributes to the well-being of their family, community and society" (B.C., 2016). Again, there is a direct correlation to First Peoples Principles of Learning. Explicitly using both Ubuntu philosophy and the First Peoples Principles of Learning as pedagogy allows Black and Indigenous students to see themselves reflected not only in what is taught, but how curriculum is taught. This will allow them to excel in the Personal Social competency and in other areas of their schooling.

Finally, this core competency promotes social awareness and responsibility. This is described as "an understanding and appreciation of connections among people, including between people and the natural environment" (B.C., 2016). These approaches nurture a student's ability to positively contribute to their communities, appreciate diverse perspectives, resolve problems and sustain healthy relationships (B.C., 2016).



Appendix B: Resources in Africa

- 65% of the world's arable land
- Aluminum
- Up to 90% of the world's chromium
- Largest reserves in the world of cobalt
- Copper
- Fish
- Gas - 8% of the world's natural gas
- Oil - 12% of the world's oil reserves
- Gold - 40% of the world's gold
- Iron
- Mineral reserves - 30% of the world's mineral reserves
- Nickel
- Phosphorous
- Up to 90% of the world's platinum (largest reserve in the world)
- Tobacco
- Titanium
- Largest reserves in the world of uranium
- Wood

Appendix C : Ancient African Empires

Aksum // Aksumite Empire ~100 to 940 AD

- Extended across most of present-day Eritrea, northern Ethiopia, Western Yemen, southern Saudi Arabia and Sudan
- Nation known for trade
 - » heavily involved in the trade network between the Mediterranean and India & northern African and Arabian states
- ~ 100 AD a trade route between Egypt to India; Aksum monopolized the Red Sea basin thus benefiting from this new trade hub
- Established their own currency
- Primarily exported agriculture goods (grains)
- Use of camel and cattle is as common now as it was at the naissance of the empire
- Iron, bronze and copper were extracted and exported
- Emperor Ezana established Christianity as a dominant religion who's scriptures exist today in Ge'ez, the alphabet established in the Aksumite empire
- The Kingdom was at its peak between 4th and 6th century reaching all the way from the Nile in Sudan to southern Arabia

Stelae

- Definition: upright stone slab or column typically bearing a commemorative inscription or relief or design, often used as a gravestone
- Monuments that commemorate the organizational and technological skill of the Aksumite
- Made of local single pieces of granite, they were cut and transported to the where they would be erected
- Primarily used to mark the burial sites of elites and royalty
- The Great Stele (sing) weighs 520 tons and is approximately 33m high.
- Fascist Italy took ownership of the Stele 2 in the 1930s, in addition to a statue of the Lion of Judah, royal and ecclesiastical crowns, state archives and paintings
- Transfer of the Stela resulted in its destruction
- It was reconstructed at the Piazza di Porta Capena in front of the (former) Ministry of Colonies
- Symbolized the desired parallel between the Roman Empire and the modern Italian state
- a 1947 peace treaty was signed and the Italian government agreed to return all treasures to Ethiopia. This was not completed until 2005
- 2008 Stela two was resurrected in its original location

Mali 1230 to 1600 AD

- Was the largest empire in West Africa, thanks to a consideration effort lead by King Sundiata Keita (known as the Lion king)
- Mali kings were called Mansa, the most influential being Mansa Musa I
 - » Mansa Musa, I has been credited as being the richest man ever.
 - » Spanish cartographer, Abraham Cresques featured Mansa Musa I in the Catalan Atlas, wearing a gold crown and holding gold in his hand.
 - » Doubled the size of the territory during his reign — multilingual and multiethnic kingdom
 - » Flourished in trade, immense gold mines within its borders. Gold that entered the empire was taxed
 - » Full time army to protect its borders
 - » Clans were obligated to provide a quota of fighting aged men to the empire's army

Timbuktu 1100 AD

- Centre for diffusion of Islamic culture
- University of Sankore
 - » 180 Koranic schools, 25 000 students
 - » Fully staffed
 - » Largest collections of books in Africa since the Library of Alexandria
- Djingareyber Mosque
- Sidi Yahia Mosque
- Marketplace and trading post
 - » Manuscripts, salt, gold, cattle and grain
- Example of urban living

The Great Zimbabwe 1100 to 1400 AD

The Great Zimbabwe Empire: Visiting Ancient African Royal Palaces

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_f0fnQVZUc

- Capital city of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe (Shona empire)
- Large scale and wealthy global trading network
 - » Pottery from China and Persia
 - » Arab coins
- Inner structures measures 9.7m in height and 250m diameter
 - » Built without mortar, relying on the shape of the rocks to maintain its shape
- Significant looting during the 20th century by Europeans
- They further propagated the idea that the city was too sophisticated to have been built by Africans

Appendix D: Jan Van Riebeeck (1619 to 1677)

This biography accompanies the student activity under the “Colonization” heading in the Erasure section.

- Dutch colonial administrator who founded Cape Town (South Africa) for white settlement
- Was sent to Southern Africa to establish a provisioning fort (where ships could stop to gather food and other resources on their way to India) as punishment for defying orders in Japan (1652)
- Could not successfully establish a fort due to crop failures (1655)
- Encouraged the importation of enslaved Africans to support the establishment of the fort and the welcoming of Dutch people to build and retain control
- Encouraged exploration and expansion into the interior, Khoekhoe territory (indigenous people), which led to wars between the Dutch and indigenous people
- Established the tradition of exiling traitors and Khoekhoe “criminals” to Robben Island, which now houses South Africa’s notorious Robben Island prison, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for fighting against apartheid.

Appendix E: Addressing the N Word

Your Black and non-Black students may acknowledge the N word as part of Black culture. Its use is widespread and the appropriateness of its use in the Black community is varied. Some Black people are reclaiming the word, to reclaim their power and transform the meaning of it. Other Black people are harmed by its use and do not use it at all. As the adult, you can listen to students’ ideas and reinforce that the word is not to be used in school.

Pause for language: Linguistic reclamation

Linguistic reclamation is the process of taking possession of a derogatory label—usually introduced by a dominant group—by stigmatized group members. This process implies that the stigmatized group members consciously use it to label themselves, thereby turning a hurtful term into a badge of pride.

The N-word was used to debase, dehumanize and devalue Black life. It was used as a tool of oppression and genocide and was used to express hatred. It lumped all people of African descent into one category. The use of the term erased any identity markers a Black person may have had, including their name, and is attached to the worst qualifiers in any language.

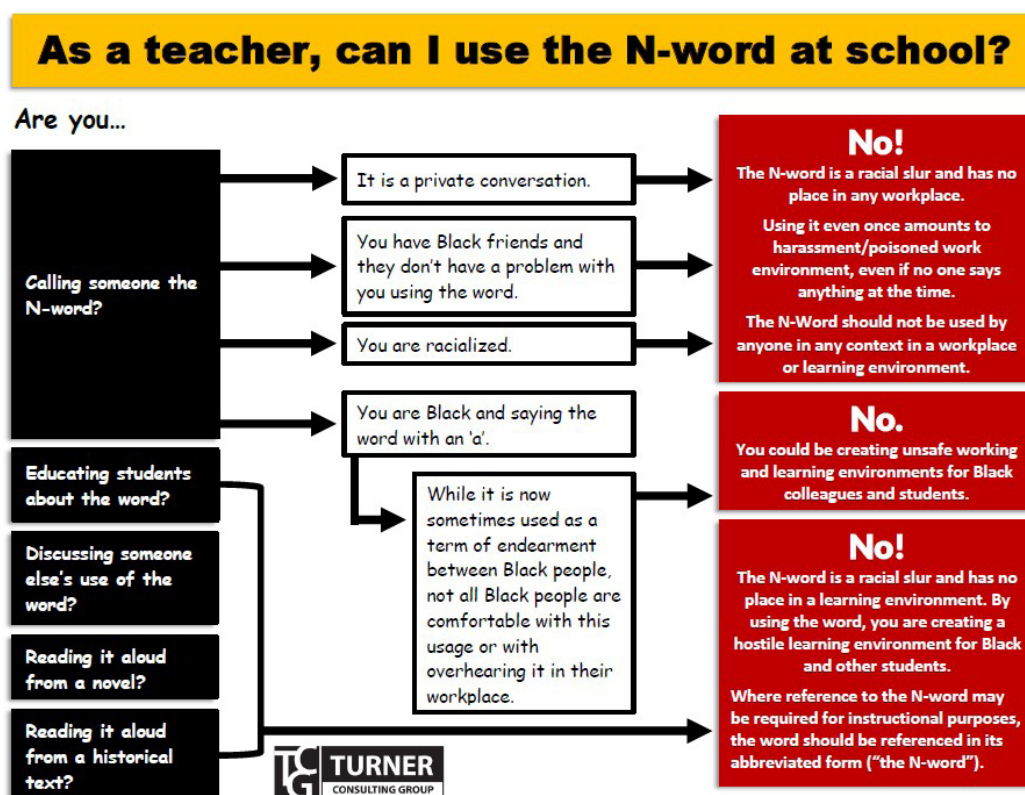
A student's relationship to the word is varied and nuanced, and no one can predict the visible or invisible harm that use of the word may cause. Take this opportunity to explain to your students that use of the N-word in any iteration (oral, written, in jest, historical context or other) is not acceptable. Moreover, Black students cannot give 'N-passes' to their non-Black friends.

Teacher tip

This conversation is important because words hold power and meaning. Use your school's acceptable behaviour guidelines and your district's non-discrimination, anti-racism, anti-bullying or safe and caring schools policy to reinforce the position. Despite being more commonly used, like all other slurs, its use by any student should not be tolerated at school.

Infographic: As a teacher can I use the N-word at school?

This infographic explains that the use of the N-word by teachers is not appropriate in any context.



Source: [https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/store/p37/Infographic%3A As a teacher can I use the N-word at school%3F.html](https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/store/p37/Infographic%3A%20As%20a%20teacher%20can%20I%20use%20the%20N-word%20at%20school%3F.html)

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Appendix F: Quotations on Excellence

Excellence is a continuous process and not an accident.

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

You may shoot me with your words, you may cut me with your eyes, you may kill me with your hatefulness, but still, like air, I'll rise.

Maya Angelou

The secret of joy in work is contained in one word—excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.

Pearl S. Buck

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.

Confucius

Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations.

Dr. Mae Jemison

Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.

Vince Lombardi

A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.

Nelson Mandela

Persistence is the twin sister of excellence. One is a matter of quality; the other, a matter of time.

Marabel Morgan

Don't waste your time striving for perfection; instead, strive for excellence—doing your best.

Laurence Olivier

Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer.

Rick Pitino

If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.

Colin Powell

Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.

Pat Riley

Excellence is not a destination; it is a continuous journey that never ends.

Brian Tracy

Make your life a masterpiece; imagine no limitations on what you can be, have or do.

Brian Tracy

Always remember you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

Harriet Tubman

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.

Booker T. Washington

Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way.

Booker T. Washington

Appendix G: Jackie Shane Biography

Jackie Shane—Challenging stereotypes and embodying excellence

Jackie Shane grew up in Nashville Tennessee in the 1940s and 50s. She witnessed not only the evolution of rock and roll, but also the inequitable treatment of African Americans, especially in southern America. In her late teens, she moved to Montreal to pursue her passion for music and eventually settled in Toronto. Jackie soon became a beloved performer in the downtown Toronto circuit, performing with her bandmate Frank Motley for full houses at nightclubs like the Sapphire Tavern. Jackie was known for innovating the burgeoning rhythm and blues (R'n'B) genre in Toronto. While Jackie is acclaimed for her music, she is also known for being unapologetically herself. As a trans person, Jackie never made herself small. Her self-acceptance made her a role model for the LGBTQ+ community in Toronto, which was largely underground. During one of Jackie's performances, she is quoted saying:

You know, when I'm walkin' down Yonge Street, you won't believe this, but you know some of them funny people have the nerve to point the finger at me and grin and smile and whisper. But you know, that don't worry Jackie, because I know I look good.

This clear message made it known that she was not going to let anyone's opinion affect her. While Canadian society still works towards acceptance of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, the Black community at the time embraced Jackie wholeheartedly. Her experience was not reflective for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community, so Jackie would use her music to empower her community through coded lyrics and double entendres. For example, lyrics from her cover "Any other way" say "Tell her that I'm happy, tell her that I'm gay, tell her I wouldn't have it any other way." At face value the lyrics are benign, however they hold meaning for those who need them. "Any other way" peaked at no. 2 on Toronto radio, making it one of Jackie's best-known songs.

Jackie left the Toronto music scene in the 1970s and relocated back to the U.S. to care for her mother. She passed away in 2019.

Appendix H: Where was I?

Following is a ten-page handout to go with the [Black communities in Canada](#) activity.

Here is a listing of each person with their time period and community.

- **Jay Douglas**, 1950–2000, Little Jamaica
- **John Craven Jones**, 1850–1899, Salt Spring Island
- **Eliza Taylor**, 1800–1849, Willow Grove
- **Rufus Rockhead**, 1900–1949, St. Antoine
- **Edith Hester McDonald**, 1800–1849, Africville
- **Oliver Le Jeune**, 1500–1699, New France
- **Willis Bowen**, 1900–1949, Amber Valley
- **Jupiter Farmer**, 1700–1799, Birchtown
- **Vie Moore**, 1900–1949, Hogan's Alley/Black Strathcona
- **Green and Abigail Doo**, 1800–1849, Buxton

Jay Douglas

I was born in Jamaica. When I was 10 my mother left to be a domestic worker in Canada. She sent money home to help us out, but I missed her.

In my late teens I moved to Canada to live with my mum. I went to school here and started to get serious about my singing career.

I've worked as a musician all my life and have been nominated for a Juno Award three times.



What's my community?



Hint

Why my mother moved to Canada will help place me in the timeline.



Visual clue

Find the place to buy tasty patties in my community.

John Craven Jones

My brothers and I were born in North Carolina. Our father dedicated his life to educating Black children, I did the same.

I graduated from the first college in the U.S. that accepted Black and later female students. I taught for two years in Ohio, but when I was 25 I moved to Canada with my brothers.

We built a log schoolhouse, called Central School. I taught there three days a week. The other three days I taught at another school five miles away.

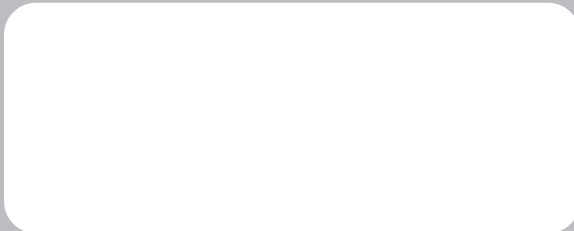
My students were the Black, Indigenous, and white children that lived in the area.

My brother William soon left for the gold rush. In addition to being a gold miner, my brother became the first licensed dentist in the province.

I taught here for 15 years. After the Civil War ended, I moved back to the U.S. where I married and raised a family.



What community am I from?



Hint

Knowing my brother was part of the gold rush will help with the time period.



Visual clue

Find the class photo from the school we built. (It's taken many years after I left.)

Eliza Taylor

I was born on a plantation in Virginia. When I was four years old, I was out with my mother and our owner. A neighbour came by and I was given to him. I never saw my mother again.

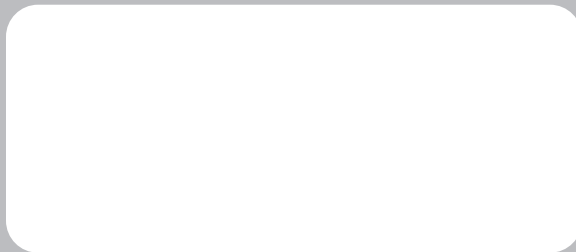
My new owner was a Loyalist, so we ended up in Canada. I worked as a servant in his house. I left at 17 when I married James. We moved to a Black farming community where we lived for the next 40 years.

When James died, I moved into the city to live with my son. When I was his age, I would not have been allowed to live there, but thankfully things had changed.

To make money I had a little stand where I sold things such as berries, chickens, and brooms. I've always loved fashion and became known for my flowing colourful skirts and straw hats. I often carried a parasol.



What farming community did my husband and I live in?



Hint

My community was outside a city that had racist rules about who could live there.



Visual clue

Find the little Baptist church they rebuilt to mark our community.

Rufus Rockhead

I was born in Jamaica and came to Canada when I was 22. I joined the Canadian Army and served in France during WWI.

At the end of the war, I found work as a sleeping car porter. I worked for eight years going back and forth to Chicago. Because of prohibition, I made money on the side by taking alcohol into Chicago on my run.

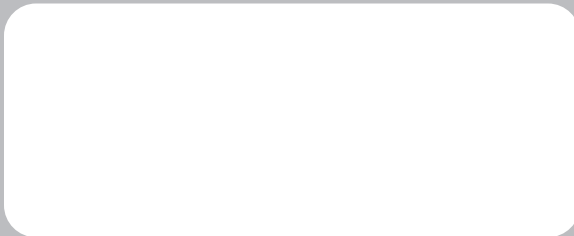


But I always dreamed of owning a jazz club. When I had enough money, I quit my railway job and bought a building.

My nightclub, Rockhead's Paradise Cafe was very successful. Many American jazz greats played there. It also gave local musicians like Oscar Peterson and Oliver Jones a place play.

Sadly, as the area declined, the club had to close after over 30 years in business.

What community was my club in?



Hint

Knowing I worked as a sleeping car porter will help with the time period. My community is one known for its jazz clubs.



Visual clue

Find the photo of jazz great Oscar Peterson and his sister Daisy, they're from my community.

Edith Hester McDonald

I was born in a village in Canada. My mother ran the general store, and I often helped out.

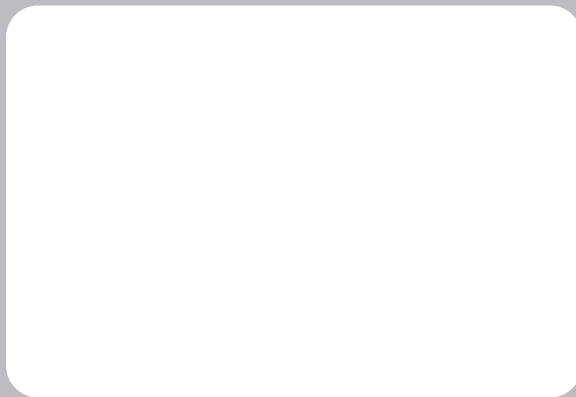
But I also loved drawing and painting. I liked to create still life and landscapes. Perhaps I painted views of Bedford Basin and Tibby's pond. I was fortunate to go to Montreal to study oil painting.

Later, I returned to my home community, married William Henry Brown Jr. and raised our family.

My granddaughter, Geraldine Parker, had four of my paintings, which were discovered in 1998. I'm now considered to be the first Black female artist in Canada.



What community did I live in?



Hint

The subjects of the landscapes I might have painted are in this community.



Visual clue

Find the hockey team that skated on the pond.

Olivier Le Jeune

I was born in Africa. When I was seven, I was kidnapped and brought here on a ship. I never saw my family again.

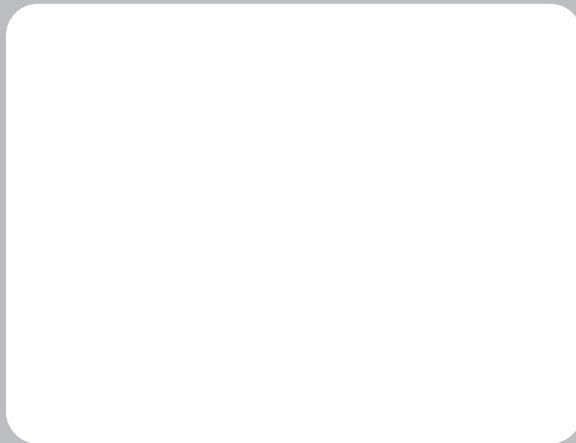
I ended up with Father Paul Le Jeune. He taught me French, Catholicism, and baptized me as Olivier Le Jeune.

I worked for Father Le Jeune all my life. He and I often travelled to meet with Indigenous Peoples. He wanted to learn their languages, music, and cultures. He believed this would help with his mission of converting them to Christianity.



Winter clothing like I might have worn.

What community did I live in?



Hint

What language did I speak?



Visual clue

You'll find settlers wearing similar winter clothes in this community.

Willis Bowen

I was born in Alabama. My wife Jeanie was Cherokee, the daughter of a Chief. We moved from Oklahoma to Canada with our seven children.

We lived in a couple of places in Canada, over the next six years, but eventually homesteaded here. We farmed and raised our 14 children in this community.

We built a log cabin. It became a meeting place for folks to drop by to catch up with each other. Later it became the post office and then had the first telephone.

Times could be hard, so sometimes I worked outside the community on ranches, grain farms, and hauling freight to make a living.

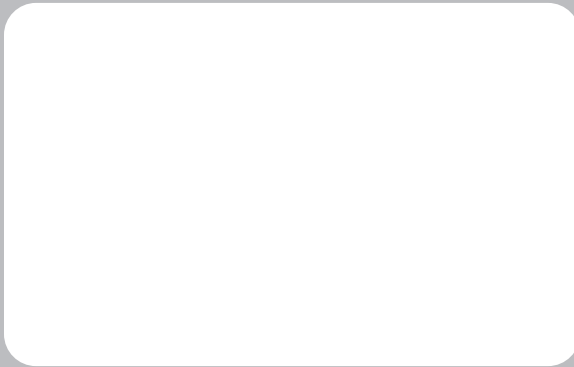
Our two eldest daughters helped too. They were teenagers when we moved here. They lived in nearby cities and worked as domestics to help support the family.

Jeanie and I stayed in this community the rest of our lives.



Schoolhouse in Willis and Jeanie Bowen's community.

What community did we homestead in?



Hint

Knowing we homesteaded and had the first telephone will help place us in the timeline. (Did you know the telephone was invented in Canada?)



Visual clue

Find the poster for Canada West in this time period. Our homesteading community is from this time.

Jupiter Farmer

My wife Venus and I both escaped enslavement and worked for the British army during the American revolution. We came north and were given land by the British.

It was poor land, but we worked together clearing off the rocks by hand and building our log house.

To support our family of four boys and two girls I worked as a labourer. Venus worked as a servant in the next town.



Jupiter and Venus Farmer built a log house in this community.

When most of our community left for Sierra Leone, we decided to stay.

What's our community?



Hint

Venus and I were Black Loyalists.



Visual clue

Find the image of the Black soldier in British uniform in this time period. Our community is from this time.

Vie Moore

My parents came up from California. I was born on an island in Canada, but later moved to the city.

My husband and I lived in a small 2 story house. We used the main floor as our restaurant. I made the best Southern fried chicken in town!

We were an after-hours place for night workers like taxi drivers, police, and newspaper reporters. We opened late afternoon and didn't close until 4 or 5 am.

Lots of entertainers would drop in after their shows. I enjoyed visits with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Lena Horn, and so many others.

Jimi Hendrix also dropped in occasionally as his grandmother, my good friend Nora, helped me out with cooking sometimes.



What community did I run my restaurant in?



Hint

The island community is where I was born. But I'm from the next time period. I stayed in the same province, my community was part of the largest city there.



Visual clue

Find my friend to find our community.

Green Doo

I was born in South Carolina, where my mother was enslaved. As a young man I escaped to Indiana. There I learned to read and write. I met my wife, Abigail there.

When I was 36, Abigail, I, and our seven children moved to Canada. We were one of the first families to settle in this area.

We bought 50 acres of land which we cleared and farmed. As the community grew, I worked as a trustee for both the church and school.

We had 13 children in total, but sadly only six lived to become adults.



Schoolhouse in Green and Abigail Doo's community.

What community did we farm in?



Hint

Venus and I were Black Loyalists.



Visual clue

Find the quilt our daughter-in-law helped sew. It has her name and our community's name in it.

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Erasure

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Black Identity

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Appendix G: Black Excellence—Jackie Shane Biography

Canadian Lesbian + Gay Archives. *No other way: The Story of Jackie Shane*. Museum of Toronto. Museum of Toronto. <https://www.museumoftoronto.com/collection/no-other-way-the-story-of-jackie-shane/>

Recommended Resources for Teachers

Additional resources appropriate for student use are included in the Resources section on the I Am Because We Are website.

General

Anti-Racism Learning Resources

List of K-12 resources compiled by Focused Education Resources

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Ffocusedresources.ca%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2022-09%2FAnti-Racism-Learning-Resources-%25284%2529.xlsx>

A Care Plan for Honest History and Difficult Conversations

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Learning for Justice

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2022/a-care-plan-for-honest-history-and-difficult-conversations>

African Diaspora

Africville Heritage Trust

<https://africvillemuseum.org/>

BC Black History Awareness Society

<https://bcblackhistory.ca/>

BC Black History Timeline

BC Black History Awareness Society

<https://bcblackhistory.ca/learning-centre/bc-black-history-timeline/>

Black History and Anti-racism in Canada

Province of Manitoba, 2021 (PDF)

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/diversity/multic/docs/black-history-anti-racism-canada.pdf>

Blackpast and the World

<https://www.blackpast.org/blackpast-and-the-world/>

Carlton Papers—Book of Negroes, 1783

Library and Archives Canada

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/loyalists/book-of-negroes/pages/introduction.aspx>

Ontario Black History Society

<https://blackhistorysociety.ca/>

Slavery: Virtual Museum of New France

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/population/slavery/>

Willow Grove, New Brunswick and Amber Valley, Alberta stamps—launch of the 13th issue in Canada Post Black History Month series

New Brunswick Museum/Musée de Nouveau-Brunswick, February 1, 2021

<https://www.nbm-mnb.ca/willow-grove-new-brunswick-and-amber-valley-alberta-stamps-launch-of-the-13th-issue-in-canada-post-black-history-month-series/>

Heroes and Rebellions

Afrofuturism: From the Past to the Living Present

Article from UCLA Magazine.

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/magazine/afrofuturism>

This is Afrofuturism

This article includes multiple examples of Afrofuturism in different contexts.

<https://africanarguments.org/2018/03/this-is-afrofuturism/>

Erasure

TRC South Africa

Truth Justic Memory : South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Process [Introduction]

Appropriate for high school students. Excellent tie-in at 15:35, with Desmond Tutu discussing the principles of Ubuntu and their relation to restorative justice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3taLI3moaM>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report

CBC news reportage on the TRC final report.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKKLgwlosaw>

Black Identity

Black Community Mixtapes

Citytv, 2023

<https://www.citytv.com/shows/black-community-mixtapes/>

Members of B.C.'s Black community set to meet with education minister about Black history curriculum

CBC News, Feb. 13, 2022

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-black-community-meeting-education-minister-blackhistory-curriculum-1.6348526>

Read the AP African American Studies Curriculum

CNN, April 26, 2023

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/26/us/ap-african-american-studies-curriculum/index.html>

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

<https://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg>

Black Excellence

Artist and Abolitionist

The Ground-breaking Black Canadian Painter Edward Mitchell Bannister (Art Canada Institute online exhibition)

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/online-exhibitions/artist-and-abolitionist-the-ground-breaking-black-canadian-painter-edward-mitchell-bannister/>

Overcoming Obstacles: Addressing Racial Bias In The Workplace

<https://dopeblack.org/overcoming-obstacles-addressing-racial-bias-in-the-workplace/>

StudioBE

Art gallery and cultural hub in New Orleans, Louisiana

<https://studiobenola.com/>

Black Communities in Canada

Africville, Nova Scotia

Africville

Entry from the Canadian Encyclopedia

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/africville>

Early Black Communities

Teachers' Zone, Canadian Museum of Human Rights

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/early-black-communities/>

Edith Hester McDonald-Brown Painting Boldly Across Genres

Art Canada Institute

https://www.aci-iac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/aci-education-newsletter_edith-hester-mcdonald-brown-painting-boldly-across-genres.pdf

Painting: Edith Hester McDonald-Brown

Black Women: Changemakers of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Teacher's Zone, Canadian Museum of History.

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/black-women-changemakers-of-the-19th-and-20th-centuries/trailblazers/edith-hester-mcdonald-brown/>

The Story of Africville

Article by Matthew McRae, Feb. 23, 2017, Canadian Museum for Human Rights

<https://humanrights.ca/story/story-africville>

Amber Valley, Alberta

Amber Valley

Entry from the Canadian Encyclopedia

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/amber-valley>

Stamps bring to light the founding stories of two early Black communities in Canada

Canada Post Magazine article

<https://www.canadapost-postescanada.ca/blogs/personal/perspectives/new-black-history-month-stamp-issue/>

‘One of the biggest Black settlements in Western Canada’ has a rich history

CBC article via the Canadian Press

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/black-settlement-alberta-amber-valley-1.5900836>

Amber Valley’s place in Canadian history

St. Albert Gazette article by Heather Stocking, Feb. 2, 2021

<https://www.stalbertgazette.com/beyond-local/amber-valleys-place-in-canadian-history-3314475>

Obadiah Place, Amber Valley: Commemorating African American Settlement in Alberta

RETROactive: Exploring Alberta’s Past; article by petermelnycky

<https://albertahistoricplaces.com/2017/02/15/obadiah-place-amber-valley-commemorating-african-american-settlement-in-alberta/>

Birchtown, Nova Scotia

Black Loyalists: Our History, Our People

Black Loyalists website

<https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/communities/birchtown.htm>

Editorial: The Arrival of Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia

Editorial from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Laura Neilson Bonikowsky, October 18, 2013

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-loyalists-feature>

Shelburne Race Riots

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Jesse Roberston, November 24, 2014

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-shelburne-race-riots>

Buxton, Ontario

Buxton National Historic Site & Museum: North Buxton, Ontario

<https://www.buxtonmuseum.com/>

Elgin Settlement

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Shannon Prince, March 22, 2021

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/elgin-settlement>

Hogan's Alley/Black Strathcona, Vancouver, British Columbia

Black History Month stamp celebrates Vancouver's Hogan's Alley

CBC News, January 30, 2014

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/black-history-month-stamp-celebrates-vancouver-s-hogan-s-alley-1.2516741>

Fielding William Spotts

Teachers' Zone, Canadian Museum of History

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/early-black-communities/hogans-alley-black-strathcona/fielding-william-spotts/>

Hogan's Alley

Entry from the Canadian Encyclopedia

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hogans-alley>

Hogan's Alley

The Knowledge Network: British Columbia: An Untold History

<https://bcantoldhistory.knowledge.ca/1960/hogans-alley>

Secret Vancouver: Return to Hogan's Alley

Telus Storyhive video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-8lgpvj0Hg>

Sleeping Car Porters in Canada

Entry from the Canadian Encyclopedia

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sleeping-car-porters-in-canada>

Little Jamaica

Breaking Chains: Thornton and Lucie Blackburn's Journey from Enslavement to Freedom

Historica Canada video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW9RXtxErtg&t=2s>

“I’m just a messenger for peace and love’: Toronto reggae legend Jay Douglas reflects on his life an career

CBC Radio, Jan. 15, 2020

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/wednesday-jan-15-2020-jeff-vandermeer-jay-douglas-and-more-1.5426533/i-m-just-a-messenger-for-peace-and-love-toronto-reggae-legend-jay-douglas-reflects-on-his-life-and-career-1.5426555>

The Jamaican Community in Canada (PDF)

Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada, Statistics Canada, by Colin Lindsay, 2001

<https://hive.utoronto.ca/public/principal/The%20Jamaican%20Community%20in%20Canada%20-%202001.pdf>

The “Likkle but Talawa” Community: Little Jamaica, Toronto’s Black Cultural District, is on the Verge of Disappearing

Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada

<https://canada-architecture.org/the-likkle-but-talawa-community-little-jamaica-torontos-black-cultural-district-is-on-the-verge-of-disappearing-2/>

The Living History of Little Jamaica

CBC News Toronto reportage on the online oral history project by Heritage Toronto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcuTevlOlws>

The Living History of Little Jamaica

Heritage Toronto

<https://www.heritagetoronto.org/explore/little-jamaica-toronto-history/>

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Karolyn Smardz Frost, May 6, 2021

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/thornton-and-lucie-blackburn>

Timeline: Slavery to Freedom

Ontario Heritage Trust

<https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/pages/our-stories/slavery-to-freedom/timeline>

West Indian Domestic Scheme: Nurturing a Nation

Episode 1 of the Historica Canada Strong and Free podcast series

<https://www.historicacanada.ca/productions/podcasts/strong-free-podcast/episode-1-strong-and-free-west-indian-domestic-sch>

Where to find a 'Little Jamaica' in Canada

National Geographic article by Heather Greenwood Davis, April 13, 2022

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/where-to-find-a-little-jamaica-in-canada>

New France

The Government of Canada Commemorates the National Historic Significance of Olivier Le Jeune

Newswire article provided by Parks Canada, Oct. 13, 2023

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/the-government-of-canada-commemorates-the-national-historic-significance-of-olivier-le-jeune-855796802.html>

Marie-Josèphe Angélique: Montreal on Fire

Episode 3 of the Historica Canada Strong and Free podcast series

<https://www.historicacanada.ca/productions/podcasts/strong-free-podcast/episode-3-strong-and-free-marie-josephe-angelique>

New France (Plain-Language summary)

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Fred Glover, July 8, 2021

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/new-france-plain-language-summary>

Quebec City

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Marc Vallières, May 13, 2008

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/quebec-city>

Timeline: Black History

Entry from the Canadian Encyclopedia

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/black-history>

St. Antoine/Little Burgundy, Montreal

Black sleeping car porters

Canadian Museum for Human Rights

<https://humanrights.ca/story/sleeping-car-porters>

Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

Historica Canada video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkYJKL5yd0U>

Early Black Communities

Teachers' Zone, Canadian Museum of History

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/early-black-communities/>

Hidden Treasures: A plastic martini glass and the 'Harlem of the North'

CBC News article by Sarah Leavitt, February 6, 2017

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/hidden-treasures-rockheads-paradise-1.3928846>

Little Burgundy and Montreal's Black English-Speaking Community

Article from the Canadian Encyclopedia by Dorothy W. Williams, Feb. 10, 2020

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/little-burgundy-and-montreal-s-black-english-speaking-community>

Oscar Peterson and Montreal's Little Burgundy

Historica Canada video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDeEHYDan9U&t=4s>

Rufus Rockhead

Rella Braithwaite Black History Foundation

<https://www.rellablackhistoryfoundation.com/rufus-rockhead>

St. Antoine/Little Burgundy (Montréal)

Teachers' Zone, Canadian Museum of History

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/early-black-communities/st-antoine-little-burgundy-montreal-quebec/>

Victoria and Salt Spring Island, British Columbia

A Black History of Victoria (PDF)

UNESCO Victoria World Heritage Project, Situation Brief #9 by M. Segger, P. Sachter, M.Q. Wong, Feb. 26, 2022

<https://victoriaworldheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Brief-9.-Feb-26.pdf>

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Willow Grove

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