Famous African Americans: Black Genius

The resources at this site are provided to support teachers in making African American history integral to classrooms every day in addition to a particular focus during Black History month. Recognizing that attention to famous Black Americans often comes primarily in a once-a-year focus on Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, this site provides resources to help you make African American contributions to science, mathematics, literature, music, dance, diplomacy, and so on on a daily occurrence in your early childhood curricula. We share these links as jumping-off points. Clearly, this is only a beginning, an impetus as you seek further knowledge. As you scroll through this rich collection of resources, we invite you to envision ways to utilize them to transform your teaching and children’s learning, ensuring that African American contributions are normalized and no longer tokenized, romanticized, misrepresented, or omitted in the day-to-day life of early childhood classrooms.

Collection of biographies:
http://www.biography.com/people/groups/african-american-firsts-education

Black history is everyone’s history:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RckRFdicze4

“10 Things that wouldn’t exist without African Americans”:
https://www.facebook.com/aol/videos/1052442548112423/?fref=nf

Changing the world:

Greats from the Harlem Renaissance:
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_harlem.html

Black women game changers:

Black History and women:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marlo-thomas/black-history-month-the-women_b_2599952.html?slideshow=true#gallery/277388/0

Invisible women of the civil rights movement:
http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/speak-easy/item/77522-the-invisible-women-of-the-civil-rights-movement

Explorers: http://thegrio.com/2015/10/12/explorers/

Famous Black Americans:
http://re-thinkingafrica.blogspot.com/2015/03/blog-post_12.html
Prominent African Americans:
http://www.aawc.com/paa.html

Chess Master: Maurice Ashley (first African American chess master) and Justus Williams, Joshua Colas, and James Black Jr, all chess masters before age 13:

Scientists, Inventors, Medical Researchers, Mathematicians

Claudia Alexander, NASA

African American scientists:
http://www.scienceupdate.com/spotlights/african-american-scientists/
http://www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-black-scientists

Black inventors:
http://blackinventor.com/

African Americans in science and technology:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/selected-internet/africanamericans.html

Mae C. Jemison
http://www.biography.com/people/mae-c-jemison-9542378

Kimberly Anyadike

Daniel Hale Williams
http://www.biography.com/people/daniel-hale-williams-9532269

George Carruthers
http://www.biography.com/people/george-carruthers-538794

Patricia Bath
• http://www.biography.com/people/patricia-bath-21038525

Nigerian twins break mathematics records:

Benjamin Banneker
http://www.black-inventor.com/Benjamin-Banneker.asp
Charles Drew
http://www.black-inventor.com/Dr-Charles-Drew.asp

Valerie Thomas
http://www.black-inventor.com/Valerie-Thomas.asp
http://www.biography.com/people/valerie-thomas-21341423

Dr. Beny J. Primm: World Expert on HIV and Addiction


Mathematician, Katherine G. Johnson: 

Scholars, Authors, Poets, Journalists, Playwrights

John Hope Franklin, Historian
http://www.newblackmaninexile.net/2015/11/angela-davis-keynote-address.html

Roscoe Lee Browne, Actor
http://blackthen.com/roscoe-lee-browne-refused-to-take-acting-parts-that-demeaned-or-mocked-african-americans/

Issa Rae, Ava DuVernay, Shonda Rimes, Debbie, Allen, Mara Brock Akil:

Alice Walker, Author
http://www.makers.com/alice-walker

W.E.B. DuBois, Scholar
https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/01/06/albert-einstein-w-e-b-duboisracism/?utm_content=bufferf7b76&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Countee Cullen, Poet
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/countee-cullen

Ida B. Wells, Author
http://www.biography.com/people/idab-wells-9527635
Ntozake Shange, Poet
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/ntozake-shange
http://aalbc.com/authors/ntozake.htm

James Baldwin, Author, Playwright

Ishmael Reed, Author

Audre Lorde, Poet
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/audre-lorde

Maya Angelou, Author
http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/maya-angelou

Faith Ringgold: Artist and Activist
http://www.makers.com/faith-ringgold

Shonda Rimes: Writer, Producer
http://www.makers.com/shonda-rhimes

Young Poets:

Science Fiction Authors:
http://blerds.atlantablackstar.com/2014/12/15/10-black-science-fiction-authors-everyone-know/

Super Hero:

Lorraine Hansberry, Author
http://aalbc.com/authors/lorraine.htm

A few (of many) Children’s Book Authors

Dinah Johnson:
http://www.dinahjohnsonbooks.com/#!bio/c1ktj

Kadir Nelson
http://www.amazon.com/Kadir-Nelson/e/B001JS2PV4/?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&tag=blagirwitlonh-20
Nikki Grimes
http://www.nikkigrimes.com/
http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/grimes

Jabari Asim
http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/107088.Jabari_Asim
https://www.facebook.com/jabariasimwriter

Andrea Davis Pinkney
http://andreadavispinkney.com/

Renee Swindle
http://aalbc.com/authors/renee-swindle.html?utm_source=aalbc&utm_medium=banner

Jacqueline Woodson
http://aalbc.com/authors/jacqueli.htm?utm_source=aalbc&utm_medium=banner

Walter Dean Myers
http://walterdeanmyers.net/

Nikki Giovanni
http://www.nikki-giovanni.com
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/nikki-giovanni

Brian Pinkney
http://www.brianpinkney.net

Andrea and Brian Pinkney
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qvw8tpbTbiI

Virginia Hamilton
http://www.virginiahamilton.com

Trish Cooke
http://www.trishcooke.co.uk

Activists (it’s not just Rosa Parks):

Amelia Boynton Robinson
http://theculture.forharriet.com/2015/08/voting-rights-activist-and-bloody.html#axzz3k6ve9n1T

Gloria Richardson:
Malcolm X:
https://medium.com/ummah-wide/what-would-malcolm-do-14-resources-for-understanding-the-life-and-legacy-of-malcolm-x-today-244a54ddc5ab#.xwms501la

Julian Bond
https://www.splcenter.org/news/2015/08/16/weve-lost-champion

Ella Baker
http://ellabakercenter.org/about/who-was-ella-baker
http://www.biography.com/people/ella-baker-9195848
http://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/ella-baker
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Uus--gFre (Ella’s Song: Sweet Honey in the Rock)

Charlotte Forten
https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/charlotte-forten-grimke/

Black LGBT icons:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/08/prominent-black-lgbt-icons_n_4747530.html

Fannie Lou Hamer
• http://wn.com/fannie_lou_hamer_im_sick_and_tired_of_being_sick_and_tired

Wangari Maathai: 20014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Green Belt Movement
https://www.facebook.com/ProfWangariMaathai

Black feminists who changed the world:
http://www.forharriet.com/2015/04/18-phenomenal-african-feminists-to-know.html#axzz3WOLz0mCS

Before Rosa Parks - Claudette Colvin:
http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/03/before-rosa-parks-teenage-claudette.html

Invisible women of the civil rights movement:
http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/speak-easy/item/77522-the-invisible-women-of-the-civil-rights-movement

Malika Saada Saar: Advocate for Women’s Rights
http://www.makers.com/malika-saada-saar
Benjamin Chavis  
http://www.blackpast.org/aah/muhammad-reverend-benjamin-chavis-1948

Medgar Evers  
http://zinnedproject.org/materials/evers-medgar/

Women’s roles in slave revolts:  
http://tulane.edu/news/newwave/020216_vanessa-holden-nat-turner-rebellion.cfm?selval=a&campaign=Women+had+a+role+in+famous+slave+revolt

National Leaders:

Barack Obama:  
• https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama  
  http://www.biography.com/people/barack-obama-12782369;  
• http://www.timeforkids.com/news/meet-barack-obama/44386  
• https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address  
• https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog#today

Congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm:  
http://www.biography.com/people/shirley-chisholm-9247015

Attorney General, Loretta E. Lynch:  
http://www.justice.gov/ag/meet-attorney-general

National Security Advisor, Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice  
http://www.blackpast.org/aah/rice-susan-elizabeth-1964

Condoleezza Rice: Secretary of State:  
http://www.makers.com/condoleezza-rice

U.S. Congressman, Andrew Young  
http://www.blackpast.org/aah/young-andrew-1932

Ambassador and Scholar, Edward Perkins  
http://www.blackpast.org/aah/perkins-edward-joseph-1928

African American Diplomats since 1969:  
http://www.blackpast.org/african-american-u-s-ambassadors-1869

Paulette Brown: Head of the American Bar Association  
Educators

Marva Collins
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMjotCrG AOY
http://www.biography.com/people/marva-collins-5894#background

Ruth Simmons: First African American Ivy League President
http://www.makers.com/ruth-simmons

Septima Clark
http://www.biography.com/people/septima-poinsette-clark-38174

Carter G. Woodson
http://www.woodsonmuseum.org/about-us

Mary McLeod Bethune
https://ncnw.org/about/bethune.htm
https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune/

Marion Wright Edelman
http://womenshistory.about.com/od/marianwrightedelman/p/m_w_edelman.htm
http://www.biography.com/people/marian-wright-edelman-39661

Visual Artists

Black artists and museums:

Leroy Campbell:

Thornton Dial:

Ernie Barnes:
http://www.erniebarnes.com/biography.html

Julian Abele:

Cbabi Bayoc, St Louis Artist: “365 Days With Dad”
Jacob Lawrence
- http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/06/15/black-lives-matter-at-moma.html

First Black Female Cartoonist: Jackie Ormes:

James Denmark

National Center for African American Artists
http://www.ncaaa.org/ncaaa.html

Beverly McIver
http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/03/interview-with-painter-beverly-mciver.html

Tyrone Geter
http://www.benedict.edu/divisions/acadaf/sch-humanities/fine_arts/art/gallery/tyrone-geter.html

Philadelphia Museum of Art
http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/03/african-american-representation-at.html

Musicians

Nina Simone: Singer, Musician, Activist
- http://www.netflix.com/WiPlayer?movieid=70308063&trkid=13752289&tctx =0%2C0%2C3264bb1b7e5e1df75bb1769beda3623548cb1%3A001bfc5d502a2ef59fe59b96b3bc246d3e7258be
- http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/02/to-be-young-gifted-black-nina-simone-at.html

Leon Bibb:

Clora Bryant:
http://upfromslavery.com/clorabryant/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73QfXfDqXcw

Bessie Smith:
http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/bessie-smith
Blues as African American history:
http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/defhistory.html
http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/defgeography.html
http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/intlyrics.html
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/lessons/following-muddys-trail/lesson-overview/1251/

Great musicians:
http://www.angelfire.com/ak/sellassie/music.html

Josephine Baker:
http://www.biography.com/people/josephine-baker-9195959

Lena Horne:
http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/02/a-lady-must-live-lena-horne-tribute.html

Hip Hop Artists

Athletes

NASCAR Drive Wendell Scott:
https://www.facebook.com/Upworthy/videos/1193991647308358/?fref=nf

Candace Hill: Fastest female runner of all times at 16:
https://www.facebook.com/Powerfulblackstories/videos/960793793964523/?fref=nf

Champion Swimmers, Lea Neal and Simone Manuel
http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2015/03/blackgirlsswimfast-lia-neal-simone.html

Gymnast, Gabrielle Douglas:
https://www.facebook.com/GabrielleDouglasUSA?ref=profile

Tennis Champions, Serena and Venus Williams:
- http://serenawilliams.com/
- http://www.magpictures.com/venusandserena/
Architecture

**Black Vernacular Architecture:**

**Julian Abele:** http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/01/08/iconic-duke-basketball-arena-designed-julian-abele-black-man/

**Black Art Project, San Francisco**

**Curator, Thelma Golden**

Dance:

**Debbie Allen and Dancers at the White House:**

**Misty Copeland**
http://www.mistycopeland.com/home.html
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ballerina-misty-copeland-talks-being-unapologetically-black-for-essence_55c80ac6e4b0923c12bd4714

**Michaela DePrince: Principal Ballerina, Dutch National Ballet**

**Ballerinas**
- http://blackballerinadocumentary.org
Aida Overton Walker
http://www.noirkulture.com/?utm_campaign=postplanner&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com#!Aida-Overton-Walker-Queen-of-the-Cakewalk/c24am/55d0f3860cf2ce5f89aca1ad

History of Black dance:
• http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1995/2/95.02.03.x.html
• http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/african-american-dance-history

Black dance magazine:
http://blackdancemag.com

International Association of Blacks in Dance:
http://www.iabdassociation.org/conference

Black female dancers and choreographers you should know:

Florence Mills:
http://www.biography.com/people/florence-mills-9408946

Janet Jackson:
http://www.biography.com/people/janet-jackson-9542443

Harold Nicholas:
http://www.biography.com/people/harold-nicholas-21355911

Fayard Nicholas:
http://www.biography.com/people/fayard-nicholas-21355929

Michael Jackson:
http://www.biography.com/people/michael-jackson-38211

Sammy Davis Jr.
http://www.biography.com/people/sammy-davis-jr-9268223

Bill Robinson
http://www.biography.com/people/bill-bojangles-robinson-9460594

Gregory Hines
http://www.biography.com/people/gregory-hines-9542572
Books as Further Resources

100 African Americans Who Shaped History, Beckner
Book of Black Heroes: Scientists, Healers, and Inventors, Hudson
Black Stars: African American Inventors, Sullivan
Portraits of African American Heroes, Bolden & Pitcairn
Black Stars: African American Women Scientists and Inventors, Sullivan