

TOPIC

Celebrating African American History Month—Activists, Scholars, and Politicians

LEVEL

High School

OBJECTIVES

This lesson plan was designed to span an entire week. Feel free to modify the assignments and activities to fit your students' abilities and the amount of time you have to cover the topic.

Through presentation and discussion, students will gain a broader knowledge of both African American History Month and the individuals for whom it is observed:

- defining terms associated with African American history
- learning about important African Americans and their influence in bringing about change
- comparing different African American philosophies and viewpoints

DAY ONE

1. Ask students the following question: "Who is Carter Godwin Woodson?" This question can serve as your introduction to African American History Month. Ask students to list which African Americans—past and present—should be honored during this month-long celebration.
2. Students should copy the words for the Guided Reading Activity from the board.
3. Use the remainder of the class period to present slides 1–42 of the presentation titled "Activists, Scholars, and Politicians" to students. Students should take notes.
4. For homework, have students complete the Guided Reading Activity.

DAY TWO

1. Begin class by discussing the homework assignment, making certain that all students understand the meaning of each word.
2. Answer any questions students may have about slides 1–42.
3. Explain (and assign) the Cooperative Learning Activity to students. This activity should take one class period.
4. For homework, students should complete the Critical Thinking Activity.

DAY THREE

1. Begin class by discussing the Critical Thinking Activity.
2. Present slides 43–72 to students. They should take notes.
3. For homework, students should complete the Extension Activity.

DAY FOUR—Library/Internet Day

1. Collect the Critical Thinking Activity homework. Review the answers as a class and discuss any unanswered questions with students.
2. Ask students to brainstorm as a class, creating a list of activists, scholars, and politicians born after 1950 whom they think should be honored during African American History Month.
3. Each student should choose an individual and begin researching—either online or in the school library—to compile a detailed biography of their individual.
4. For homework, students should complete the biography. The biography should include a brief description of the person's childhood and education. In addition, the biography must explain the individual's contributions and how they have impacted African American history.

DAY FIVE

1. Each student will have 4 to 5 minutes to present their individual's biography to the class.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Guided Reading Activity

Before presenting the PowerPoint® presentation titled "Activists, Scholars, and Politicians," list the words below on the board.

- culture
- unconstitutional
- suffragist
- abolitionist
- posthumously
- subservience
- lynching
- Pan-Africanism
- civil rights
- boycott

Distribute the Guided Reading Activity handout. Have students listen for these key/vocabulary words as they watch the presentation. Have them use context to figure out the words' meanings and write the meanings on a sheet of paper. For homework, students should look up the words in a dictionary.

Cooperative Learning Activity

Students will choose candidates for an award, honoring the most influential person from the Day One presentation.

Ask students to vote on which individual they think was the most influential. Once they have voted, students should break into groups according to their "candidate."

Students will work together to create a detailed biography and to prepare an argument, explaining why their candidate deserves the award. Tell the members of each group to identify strategies, such as boycotts and sit-ins, that their candidate used to bring about change. They should also identify any philosophies or political viewpoints of their candidate.

Each group's argument must include answers to the following questions/prompts:

1. Identify the factors that played a role in the development of your candidate. How did these factors influence your candidate?
2. Determine the individual's most significant contribution and explain why this contribution qualifies your candidate for the honor, arguing how it is more important than the other candidates' contributions.

3. Explore the idea of what would have happened had your candidate not made this contribution. Would the lives of African Americans today be any different?

Each group has 5 minutes to present its argument to the class.

Critical Thinking Activity

Students will compare and contrast the conflicting views of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. This may require additional research. Direct students to the "Beyond the Textbook" World Wide Web Resources.

1. Describe the philosophical views of Booker T. Washington.
2. How do these views differ from the views of W.E.B. Du Bois?
3. Which philosophy do you think had the biggest impact on African American society? Why?
4. If both men were alive, with what political party do you think each would identify?

Extension

1. Thurgood Marshall served on the Supreme Court of the United States from 1967 to _____.

Answer) 1991

2. What court case is considered to be the most important to Marshall's legacy? Why?

Answer) *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Answers will vary, but should include that this case overturned the *Plessy* decision.

3. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, she sparked a bus _____.

Answer) boycott

4. _____ opposed the civil rights movement and instead encouraged black separatism and self-dependence.

Answer) Malcolm X

5. In 1954, _____ was appointed Mississippi's first field secretary for the NAACP.

Answer) Medgar Evers

6. Byron de la Beckwith was convicted of the murder of _____.

Answer) Medgar Evers

7. _____ was the greatest force behind the Civil Rights Movement.

Answer) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

8. In August 1963, Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream Speech" at the _____.

Answer) March on Washington

9. _____ was appointed Secretary of State in 2001.

Answer) Colin Powell

10. _____ was appointed National Security Adviser in 2001.

Answer) Condoleezza Rice