

TOPIC

Celebrating African American History Month—Scientists, Athletes, and Entertainers

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:

- Students will learn about important African Americans and their groundbreaking contributions to science, athletics, and entertainment.
- Students will compare and contrasting the pioneers to current athletes and entertainers.
- Students will research modern scientists, athletes, and entertainers.

DAY ONE

1. List the following inventions on the board: traffic light, oil cup, talcum powder, Worcestershire Sauce, electric incubator.
2. Ask students to name the inventors of these items. You can use this activity to introduce the African American History Month topic "Scientists."
3. Use the remainder of the class period to present slides 1–26 of the presentation titled "Scientists, Athletes, and Entertainers" to students. Students should take notes.
4. For homework, ask students to visit the Web site "The Faces of Science: African Americans in the Sciences" and choose an African American inventor to profile (Web site: <http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/faces.html>). Students will present a short biography to the class on DAY TWO. The biography must include the inventions of each individual.

DAY TWO

1. Each student will have five minutes to present his or her biography to the class.
2. Ask students to name African Americans they think were important pioneers in the world of athletics. List the names on the board. In addition, students should brainstorm as a class to create a list of current major African American athletes.
3. Use the remainder of the class period to present slides 27–84 of the presentation titled "Scientists, Athletes, and Entertainers" to students. Students should take notes.
4. For homework, students should complete the Critical Thinking Activity.

DAY THREE

1. Begin class by discussing the homework assignment.
2. Answer any questions students may have about slides 27–84.
3. Present slides 85–100 to students. They should take notes.
4. For homework, students should complete the Extension Activity.

Extension Activity

1. Geore Washington Carver researched _____ goods to create useful products.
(Answer: agricultural)
2. _____ studied mechanical engineering in Scotland and worked as an engineer for the Michigan Central Railroad.
(Answer: Elijah McCoy)
3. Garrett Augustus Morgan sold his invention to the _____ for \$40,000.
(Answer: General Electric Company)
4. _____ was one of the first American women of any race to become a millionaire through her own business venture.
(Answer: Sarah Breedlove Walker)
5. _____ worked as an Aerospace Technologist for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
(Answer: Katherine G. Johnson)
6. _____ was the sole African American member of the *Edison Pioneers*, Thomas Edison's elite research team.
(Answer: Lewis Howard Latimer)
7. Before becoming an inventor, _____ held many jobs that helped to hone his creativity, working as a fireman, a railroad engineer, and a chief engineer aboard a steamboat.
(Answer: Granville T. Woods)

8. _____ won four gold medals during the 1936 Olympic Games held in Nazi Germany.
(Answer: Jesse Owens)
9. _____ held the heavyweight boxing title from 1937 to 1949, the longest reign of any heavyweight.
(Answer: Joe Louis)
10. In 1947, _____ joined the Brooklyn Dodgers to become the first African American to play modern major league baseball.
(Answer: Jackie Robinson)
11. In 1960, _____ became the first American woman to win 3 gold medals in one Olympics.
(Answer: Wilma Rudolph)
12. _____ left high school in 1952 to join the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro American League.
(Answer: Hank Aaron)
13. In 1967, _____ was stripped of his title and boxing license by refusing to obey the draft to serve in Vietnam.
(Answer: Muhammad Ali)
14. _____ set numerous records and had amazing accomplishments in the football arena.
(Answer: Walter Payton)
15. The accomplishments of _____ include setting the current world record for long jump at 24 feet, 7 inches.
(Answer: Jackie Joyner-Kersey)
16. After becoming president of basketball operations for the Washington Wizards, _____ decided his team needed his skills on the court more than in the office.
(Answer: Michael Jordan)
17. In 2000, _____ became the youngest golfer to complete a career Grand Slam, winning all four major golf tournaments.
(Answer: Tiger Woods)

18. One or both of the _____ sisters have defeated most of the major players in tennis, including Davenport, Graf, Hingis, Martinez, and Seles.
(Answer: Williams)
19. _____ is most remembered for her supporting role of Mammy in the 1939 film *Gone with the Wind*.
(Answer: Hattie McDaniel)
20. In 1963, _____ was awarded the Oscar for best actor for his role in *Lilies of the Field*.
(Answer: Sydney Poitier)
21. In _____, for the first time in the Academy's 74-year history, two African American performers were awarded Oscars for best actor and best actress.
(Answer: 2002)
22. In 1956, _____ became the first African American to host a variety show.
(Answer: Nat King Cole)
23. Perhaps the most remembered performances of _____ are those with the famous "Rat Pack."
(Answer: Sammy Davis, Jr.)
24. _____ became one of the most recognizable faces in America as a spokesperson for the Coca-Cola Company, Jell-O, Kodak, Del Monte, and the Ford Motor Company.
(Answer: Bill Cosby)
25. In September 2000, _____ became the first recipient of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Bob Hope Humanitarian Award.
(Answer: Oprah Winfrey)

DAY FOUR—Internet/Library Day

1. Collect the Extension Activity homework. Review the answers as a class and discuss any unanswered questions with students.
2. Explain (and assign) the Cooperative Learning Activity to students. Give students the remainder of the class period to research for their presentation—either online or in the school library. This activity should take the remainder of the class period as students break into four to five groups to prepare a short presentation.
3. For homework, students should complete their presentation(s).

Cooperative Learning Activity

Students should break into groups of four to five. They should debate as a group, deciding which of the individuals—from one of the categories covered in the “Scientists, Athletes, and Entertainers” presentation—has had the most positive influence for African Americans.

Allow students time to conduct further research on this individual, using library and Internet resources. They should spend the remainder of class preparing a five-minute presentation.

DAY FIVE

1. Each group will have ten minutes to present its Cooperative Learning Activity to the class. Each group member should contribute a part of the presentation.