

6 Teaching Tools for Black History Month

[Matt Davis](#) January 28, 2013 Updated January 15, 2016

Open Education Resources



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Black History Month provides a great opportunity for students to explore and learn more about a variety of issues. But it's important that teachers "reinforce that 'black history' is American history," writes Pat Russo in [Do's and Don'ts of Teaching Black History Month](#). Russo's article is a great place to start when determining how to best incorporate black history into your lesson plans. Really, it's a topic that should be incorporated throughout the year, Russo writes, but in February, teachers can dig deeper, provide students with more context, and connect the past to the present.

Every year since 1928, the [Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#) has provided a theme for Black History Month. This year, we'll celebrate the 101st Black History Month, and the theme is "Hallowed

Grounds: Sites of African American Memories." Here are some resources for diving into that theme:

Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories

- [Black History Month Resources for the Classroom](#): PBS curated a valuable collection of teaching resources, covering a variety of themes and important locations central to African American history in the U.S. The focus is primarily on upper grades -- 6-12 -- and there are lesson plans, videos, and multimedia collections available. Also, check out the [Civil Rights Collection From PBS LearningMedia](#), which features a trove of engaging content.
- [EDSITEment's Guide to Teaching Black History Month](#): EDSITEment, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, produced this useful resource covering black history through many eras. The guide features lessons plans and resources for teaching black history. Lesson plans and other resources are grouped according to different periods, including the Jim Crow era, the Twenties and Great Migration, and the World Wars.
- [African American History Month Resources From the Library of Congress](#): There's plenty for students to discover in this collection from the LOC. In addition to [lesson plans for teachers](#), there's also a cache of primary sources for students to explore, including artwork, baseball cards, political cartoons, and photographs. Also be sure to check out the Library's [civil rights-themed collection](#).
- [African American History Month Collection From TeachingHistory](#): There is a stockpile of engaging content in this resource from TeachingHistory from the National History Education Clearinghouse. Included are interesting collections for students of all ages to explore, lesson plans for teachers, and interactive quizzes.

- [African American History Through the Arts](#): In this collection from ArtsEdge, students can explore black history through the lens of a variety of artistic disciplines, including music, poetry, and dance. There are lesson plans, as well as collection of primary multimedia sources; and there are resources targeted at students of all ages. Another great arts-related collection, The [National Association for Music Education's lesson plans page](#), covers African American contributions to music.
- [Smithsonian Education's Black History Month Teaching Resources](#): These resources from Smithsonian Education feature various collections, from "The Blues and Langston Hughes" to "Harlem Renaissance: A Reading List." It's a great place to let your students explore primary sources, and there is something for students of all ages.

Additional Resources for Black History Month

- [Dive Into Primary Sources on BlackPast.org](#): BlackPast.org is one of the largest repositories of information relating to Black History on the web. The site features more than 13,000 pages, and the content is organized into three categories: African American History, African American History in the American West, and Global African History. Teachers, be sure to check out [BlackPast in the Classroom](#) for ideas and tips for using the site with students.
- [EdTech Ideas From Edutopia](#): Last year, Edutopia blogger Irvin Weathersby curated some really innovative tech tools for exploring Black History Month. One that's particularly relevant to this year's theme is [More than a Map\(p\)](#), a "multi-layered geo-location app that locates sites and landmarks relevant to African American history in your immediate vicinity."
- [Beyond Black History Month From Learn NC](#): This article from the University of North Carolina's School of Education offers ways teachers

can "shift the lens" and explore African American history from new perspectives. The school has also produced a long list of [lesson plans and related resources](#) for teaching black history.

- [Celebrate African American Heritage With Scholastic](#): This rich collection of teaching resources covers a lot of ground, including the Civil Rights Movement, African American contributions to the arts, and slavery in America. Each topic is covered with lesson plans, multimedia, and reading lists.
- [Black History Month Lessons and Resources From the NEA](#): The National Education Association produced this exhaustive collection of teaching resources for Black History Month. Lesson plans are provided for all grade levels, and they include quizzes, discussion topics, and background information.
- [Civil Rights Lessons From the Smithsonian](#): Smithsonian Source offers a smaller package of document-based question (DBQ) activities and lesson plans with links to source material. There are resources here for all grades, including two elementary school plans and both high school and middle school DBQs.

There are many wonderful resources online for Black History Month. Unfortunately, we could only cover a few. Did we miss anything? What resources do you use in your classroom?