



# Bala Cynwyd Middle School Black History Month

There are many important lessons, projects and events taking place across teams and across subjects at Bala Cynwyd Middle School in February (and beyond) to celebrate Black History Month.

## 5th Grade Knights:

- 5th grade students will work together by displaying posters highlighting achievements and accomplishments of important figures that we celebrate during Black History Month. Each board will have an interactive component in which students will scan a QR code that will bring them to a Google Slide. The Google Slides will contain videos and other resources for students to research and record their findings.

## 6th Grade Knights:

- Students collaborated by gathering supplies from the school-wide sock drive for our MLK Morning of Service. 6th grade students sorted and itemized donations to assist the volunteers at St. John's Men's Shelter for distribution. Through the service project, students learned the value in engaging in cooperative efforts.
- Students continually engage in critical conversations surrounding what a fair and just society looks like, through projects such as analyzing dystopian literature through a critical lens. This unit provides students with insight into the essence of what true justice is.
- Students are analyzing the "What is your Life's Blueprint," speech that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King gave to a Philadelphia Jr. High school in 1967. During our unit on government, we will be highlighting student rights in protesting, referencing protests during the civil rights movement and beyond.

## 7th Grade Knights:

- 7th Grade scientists on both teams learn about the contributions of [Henrietta Lacks and her "immortal" HeLa cancer cells](#). We discuss/debate the ethical quandaries regarding using her cells without her consent, whether her family should be compensated, and whether we would be ok with doctors using our cells for medical research.
- Students will begin work researching several scientists that connect to our curriculum on cell transport, cellular energy processes and genetics.

## 8th Grade Knights:

- English classes will read *Of Mice and Men*, a classic in which questions of belonging, majority/minority, and power differences are considered, both by the author and by the students.
- Students continue to utilize the book *STAMPED-Racism, Antiracism, and You* as part of our curriculum. STAMPED is an excellent resource to examine U.S. History through the lens of the African American perspective.
- During our unit of the Second Industrial Revolution, we focused our research on famous Black inventors who contributed to the industrial growth of the United States. Students look closely at the effects of life after the Civil War, focusing on important Black Americans during the progressive era. Figures such as Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B DuBois are studied, focusing on their tireless efforts to secure equal rights for all citizens.

Comparisons are made to the massive immigrant population arriving and facing discrimination because of their differences and the struggles with discrimination that African Americans continue to face in a Post Civil War America.

World Language:

- French:
  - Comprehensible French posters are created about famous French-speakers with African & Caribbean roots.
  - Comprehensible mini readers about famous French-speakers of color within class discussions of the contributions of French-speakers of color to literature, art, music, science, and sports
- Latin:
  - Students create posters and host discussion about famous African American Classicists
- Spanish:
  - Students build posters of notable Afro-Latinos with information about people in various professions and how they have affected our country and the world.
  - Carousel type readings and discussions in groups take place about said people to answer critical thinking questions. Additionally, Spanish classes are exploring Important Afro-Latinos (Roberto Clemente, Celia Cruz). The Afro-Latino culture and influence historical perspective and influence-Afro-Latino music and dance.

Health/PE:

- Students in Health classes will be learning about the cardiovascular system and the contributions of Vivian Thomas, who overcame poverty, racism to become a pioneer in cardiac surgery and trained a generation of surgical residents at Johns Hopkins University.

Vocal and Instrumental Music:

- Orchestra students in 5th and 6th grade will explore and perform music by African American composers including *Circle of Rhythm* by Renard Burns and *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Weldon Johnson.
- 8th Grade General Music Students are completing an online lesson on *The History of the Blues* (in Focus on Sound software located in the Music First platform.) This interactive lesson includes reading, listening and a Booklet, and covers such artists as WC Handy, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, and Count Basesy.
- Chorus classes, led by our Advance chorus students, are singing, and learning about the song *We Shall Overcome* and its history within the Civil rights movement.
- General Music students will be learning about trailblazing African American musicians and their contributions, not only to the world of music, but within the context of their monumental impact on the world: from pioneering and inspiring some of our most popular genres of music today to striving for social justice.

Art:

- Students will study African American artist Kehinde Wiley and create a clay portrait in the style of Kehinde Wiley, which is a recreation of Renaissance paintings with contemporary African American models.

FCS:

- Units will focus on African American sewists and crafters who are establishing their

clothing lines mainly through upcycling/ using vintage textiles.

**Presentation:**

- Students will complete a scrapbook for a historical Black figure.

**Computers:**

- Students in all grades will work on the *Lessons and Activities: Black Pioneers in Computer Science History*, on [code.org](http://code.org).

**Gifted:**

- Students are preparing to post a hallway mural of “One Crown Heights”, a building mural that depicts African American, Caribbean, and Jewish community members working and living together.



**Leadership:**

- Leadership students will work on collaborative puzzles regarding prominent figures in African American History

**Library:**

- The library brings Black History Month to life for BC students using “Top Picks of the Day” on the Announcements (African American Authors), Library Book Displays, Curation of Picture Books Biographies for teachers/students, and an African American Read-in in Grade 5 Library Class
- Author Event and assembly with popular writer Torrey Maldonado during the week of February 19th (date to be determined).

**ELD:**

- Students will learn about prominent figures celebrated during Black History Month. After learning about a few prominent figures, students will select one to study further. Students will then create 3-5 quiz questions on their figure and will hide their questions around the room for their classmates to find and answer.