

Black History Month Exercises – 2026

The Black History Month Walking Tour is a showcase of student projects created in celebration of Black History Month, displayed on bulletin boards throughout the building. In early March, social studies teachers guide their classes on a tour so that all students can view and appreciate this work. Teachers across various grade levels and subjects collaborate to create engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students during Black History Month. The annual Walking Tour not only highlights these efforts but also provides an opportunity to honor the significant contributions of Black history while celebrating the creativity and achievements of our students.

Please peruse the following engaging classroom learning exercises/projects (not a comprehensive list):

7th Grade Social Studies – Mr. Gari

- Students will be researching notable African Americans of their choice from 1800-1900 or 2000- in the fields of Science/Invention, Entertainment. They will then create mini-posters using technology tools to commemorate the African American historical figures who inspired them.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: Consider the diversity and representation of African American figures highlighted in the mini-posters. How does this celebration of diverse voices enrich our collective understanding of history, and what can we learn from the varied experiences and accomplishments of these remarkable individuals?

7th Grade Social Studies – Mr. Davis

- Students will be researching notable African American historical figures in the fields of Science/Invention, as well as Entertainment from 1800-2000. They will then create mini-posters to commemorate the African American historical figures who inspired them. Students will also collaborate to create a 14-foot mosaic of notable African Americans that will be displayed in the hallway.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: As you engage with the mini-posters and the 14-foot mosaic celebrating notable African American historical figures, reflect on the diverse legacies and contributions of these inspirational individuals. How do their stories and achievements resonate with you, and which figures left a lasting impact on your understanding of history and culture?

7th Grade Science – Ms. Hewston & Mr. Lewis

- Students will be learning about Henrietta Lacks and how her HeLa cells impacted the future of medical innovations. Student work samples will be displayed on the bulletin board near Room A114.

- Bulletin Board Prompt: Was the sampling and use of Henrietta Lacks's cells (without her knowledge) ethical?

Health & Physical Education – Ms. Conran & Mr. Scali

- Students will view the documentary film, “Partners of the Heart,” the story of Vivien Thomas and how he became a medical pioneer in shock treatment and cardiovascular surgery from Johns Hopkins Hospital. Students will then reflect on Vivian Thomas’ lasting legacy and consider their own aspirations for impacting their future world.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: Consider the impact of Vivien Thomas' groundbreaking work on shock treatment and cardiovascular surgery. How does his story encourage you to reflect on your own potential to make a positive impact in the world, and what aspirations do you have for contributing to the betterment of society?

Communications & Presentation – Mr. Murray & Ms. Oakes

- The 7th and 8th grade Communications classes will be examining the history of quilts in Black American culture, focusing on the significance of the codes and messages embedded within these artworks. We will collaborate to create a quilt that represents Welsh Valley, conveying a message of community, and display it in The Link to celebrate our diversity.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: How can the patterns, colors, and materials in a quilt symbolize the diverse cultural identities and experiences within a community, and what does this reveal about the importance of unity in African American history?

6th Grade English-Language Arts – Ms. Chung, Ms. Horvath, Ms. Kauffman, Ms. Willias

- Students will research an African American figure in the fields of education, military, and aviation (pre-1800-2000), who through collective action, influenced American society. Students will then create interactive flip cards to present their research on their chosen historical figure.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: Who were the African Americans in the fields of education, aviation, and military who influenced American society?

6th Grade Science – Ms. Weber & Mr. Carangi

- Students conducted research on influential Black scientists, highlighting their groundbreaking contributions across various fields of science.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: How did the contributions of these influential Black scientists change the way we understand or use science in our daily lives, and which one inspires you the most to explore new ideas?

5th Grade ELA & Social Studies – Ms. Ash, Ms. Deangelis, Ms. Granieri, Ms. Pezick & Mr. Tavani

- Students will create a quilt square that symbolizes themes like freedom, resilience, hope, community, and cultural heritage. Fifth grade ELA classes will kick off this cross-curricular inquiry in the library, through participation and engagement in an African American Read In during the first week in February. From there, students will engage in thematic inquiry and create quilt squares which interweave symbolic representation and connection to featured texts.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: How can symbols tell a story? How do the stories on these quilt squares connect us? Choose two (or more) quilt squares that you feel best showcase a personal connection to a symbolic representation of freedom, resilience, hope, community, and cultural heritage.

5th Grade Math – Ms. Clark

- Students will be researching a black mathematician of their choice and describing their contributions to the field by creating a one-pager with content and visuals.
- As you explore the mini-projects highlighting the contributions of black mathematicians, reflect on the groundbreaking work and impact of these remarkable individuals in the field of mathematics. What barriers do you think they had to overcome, and how do their contributions inspire you to pursue your own goals and aspirations?

5th Grade Math – Ms. Clark

- Students will research and present stories and contributions of Black mathematicians throughout history.
- How do the contributions of Black mathematicians continue to impact the world today, both in mathematics and beyond?

Computers – Ms. Tifft

- 6th grade students – After picking and researching a black pioneer in computer science, students will create a Google drawing infographic.
- 8th grade students – After picking and researching a black pioneer in computer science, students will compile 6 facts into QR codes and create a cube.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: What challenges have Black innovators faced, and how did they overcome them to make a difference? (6th) How have Black pioneers in STEM shaped the future, and what lessons can we learn from their achievements? (8th)

8th Grade Social Studies – Ms. Peterson & Ms. Campbell

- 8th grade social studies students will explore the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877) through a multimodal fair, where each student or group creates an exhibit showcasing a specific aspect of Reconstruction. The exhibits will reflect their learning and perspective on the successes, challenges, and legacies of Reconstruction.

- Bulletin Board Prompt: How did the Reconstruction Era shape the successes, challenges, and lasting legacies of rebuilding the United States after the Civil War?

French – Ms. Arnold & Ms. Phillipson-Weiner

- All French students will learn about black Francophone music artists during our Manie Musicale Unit. Seventh graders will research black Francophone trailblazers and create a brief presentation on the person of their choice. Eighth Grade students will complete a magazine project on Rwanda and participate in a cultural unit on Togo.
- Bulletin Board Prompts: As you reflect on the trailblazers highlighted in the scavenger hunt, which of these inspire you to pursue your dreams? How did this trailblazer overcome difficult odds to pursue their passion? (5/6) As you reflect on the trailblazers highlighted in your presentations, which of these inspire you to pursue your dreams? How did this trailblazer overcome difficult odds to pursue their passion? (7) How does this exploration of diverse cultures foster greater cultural appreciation and understanding of French-speaking countries and broaden your understanding of the Francophone world? (8)

Art – Ms. Wallitsch & Ms. Greber

- Each day in the month of February, art teachers will highlight the work of accomplished BIPOC artists. Students will reflect and respond in their sketchbooks.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: During February, as you explore the diverse works of BIPOC artists, think about how their art inspires you. How do their ideas and unique perspectives influence your own art and creativity?

8th Grade Science – Ms. Hunt & Mr. Sullivan

- Students will be listening to interviews and podcasts from the inspirational astrophysicist and advocate for scientific literacy, Neil deGrasse Tyson, as well as reading articles and researching other individuals currently pursuing rewarding careers in STEM who challenge stereotypes of scientists and engineers.
- Bulletin Board Prompt: What is one thing you see on this display of diverse role models in STEM that inspires you in some way, surprises you or leaves you curious? #curiosity!

Additional Classroom Learning Experiences

- Student leaders develop and present Morning Announcements which educate the whole school community about African-American history and culture during the month of February.
- Students will participate in the African-American Read-In (AARI) at some point during the month of February. Teachers of English language arts prep their classes and frame the exercise in advance of this visit to the Library. Students then visit the library to browse the

featured AARI materials, read texts of interest to them, and then at the end of the class period students are welcome to check out any materials of interest for further reading.

- All students experienced a lesson on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on our Day of Service.
- Students worked with art teachers Ms. Wallitsch and Ms. Greber to create art pieces made during our MLK day of service. We participated in Students Rebuild, a program founded in 2010 that empowers young people around the world to learn about global issues, take action, and give back through creativity. This year's project, Unique & United, invited students to explore their identities, celebrate differences, and use art and creative expression to build empathy, connection, and positive change. Each student artwork contributes to a global fundraiser supporting real-world causes and communities in need."
- Students in Ms. Peterson's and Ms. Campbell's 8th grade social studies classes will explore the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877) through a multimodal fair, where each student or group creates an exhibit showcasing a specific aspect of Reconstruction. The exhibits will reflect their learning and perspective on the successes, challenges, and legacies of Reconstruction.
- Students in Mr. Howarth's and Ms. Ziemba's 7th grade ELA classes will read *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds. Told in powerful verse, the novel invites students to reflect on identity, choices, and the rules we are taught to follow. *Long Way Down* lifts up voices and experiences that are often unheard, encouraging students to listen closely, think critically, and understand the importance of diverse stories.
- Students in Ms. Lam's Music classes will explore the legacy of Black musical artists through daily listening exercises. These informal immersive experiences will help students understand the roots of musical genres and appreciate the cultural contributions that continue to define the world of music.
- Students in Mrs. Sweeney's 5th grade classes are starting each day in February with a morning meeting discussion of an inspirational African American figure. The class reads a brief biography, watches a short video clip featuring their accomplishments, and selects a picture book from the library for additional reading.
- Students in Ms. Rittenshouse's, Mr. Mara's, Ms. Sullivan's, and Ms. Marsala's 5th grade Spanish classes will engage in a gallery walk to learn about the community in Colombia that is known as the first free town in the Americas, San Basilio de Palenque. The town was established by enslaved Africans who fled from Spanish colonial plantations and settlements in search of freedom. San Basilio de Palenque was a sanctuary where former slaves could live independently and preserve their African culture and traditions. These cultures and traditions are still alive today. In addition to the gallery walk, students will read articles, listen to music, and watch videos to learn more about the traditions of this community. Our guiding question is How is San Basilio de Palenque connected to Black history and African culture in the Americas?

- Students in Mr. Mara's 7th grade Spanish classes will read a book in Spanish about Kobe Bryant, learning about his upbringing in Italy, his rise to stardom, and his eventual tragic end, while also being introduced to the past tense.