

LESSONS

Use these scripted lessons to support students in their close watching and analysis of videos grouped by theme.

BLACK DISCOVERIES AND BLACK PATENTS



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 3-5, 6-8

In this lesson, students will learn how Black discovery is at the heart of the study of African American history. They will hear how inventors like Lewis Latimer, Sarah Boone, Thomas Jennings, Judy Reed and others advanced their fields and made life for Americans safer, more efficient and more comfortable. They will also think about and discuss how Black pioneers in science and technology demonstrated ingenuity despite barriers to education and opportunity.

KEY FIGURES

- Lewis Latimer
- Sarah Boone
- Thomas Jennings
- Judy Reed
- Garrett Morgan
- Sarah Goode
- Jan Matzeliger

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

- General Electric
- United States Electric Lighting Company
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How is Black discovery a critical part of Black history?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of its diverse members?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Black inventors contributed significantly to the advancement of American innovation.
2. Black inventors found ways to contribute their ideas despite systems that tried to keep them from getting money or credit.
3. Black Americans have not only improved daily life for all Americans but have laid the foundation for other talented creators.

Procedure

VIEW

FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PATENT HOLDERS
19th CENTURY BLACK DISCOVERIES

VOCABULARY CONCEPT SORT

WHAT Students learn new vocabulary and sort it into categories to clarify the meaning of unknown words and demonstrate understanding of word relationships.

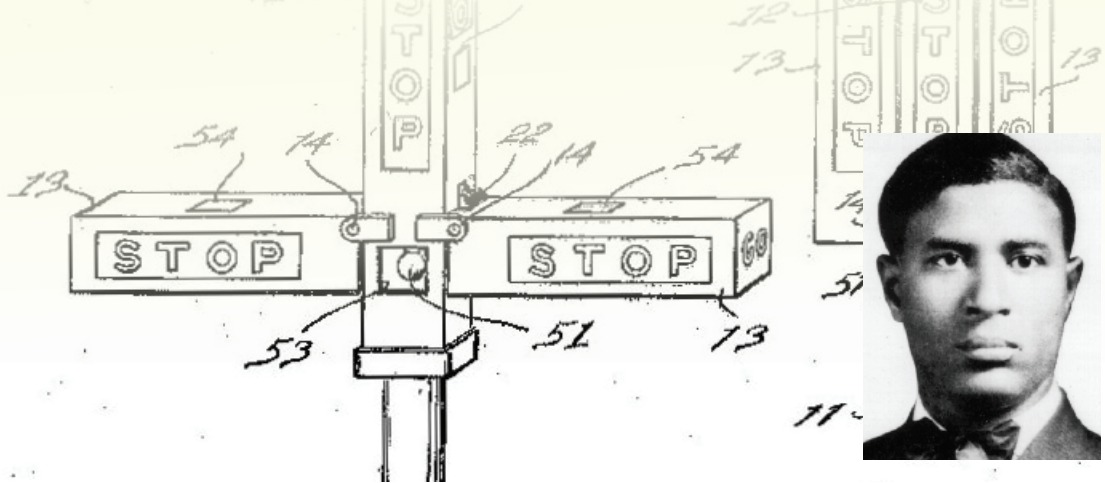
WHEN Use during viewing.

HOW

1. Decide whether students will work individually or in groups.
2. Explain to students that they will be watching two videos on the theme of Black ingenuity and innovation. As they watch, have students choose 4 to 6 vocabulary words (total) from the two videos. Ask them to select either words that are entirely new to them or words they recognize but don't necessarily know the meaning of.

3. Instruct students to write the words on sticky notes or index cards (one word per sticky/card).
4. Have students watch the videos again.
5. Ask students to define each word using context clues from the video and write their definition on the opposite side of each sticky/card.
6. As a class, determine relevant categories for the words and sort the words into the designated categories. Categories might include roles, ideas, descriptors, systems or any other concepts students gravitate toward.
7. Together, debrief the categories and definitions. Clarify any unclear or incorrect definitions. Discuss how students determined categories and why certain words were placed in certain categories.
8. Connect the vocabulary words to the essential questions.

GARRET MORGAN WAS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST PROLIFIC AFRICAN AMERICAN INVENTORS. AMONG HIS OTHER INVENTIONS, HE DEVELOPED THE THREE-POSITION TRAFFIC SIGNAL AFTER WITNESSING A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.



CLOSE READING: DOODLES

WHAT A strategy in which students draw, chart or otherwise visually represent words or phrases.

WHEN Use during viewing.

HOW

1. Post and consider the essential questions.
 - *How is Black discovery a critical part of Black history?*
 - *How does society benefit from the contributions of its diverse members?*
2. Share this [Sketchnoting](#) explainer video with students.
3. Have students watch the videos. Instruct students to sketchnote or doodle answers and ideas to the essential questions on a piece of paper while they watch.
4. Have students watch the videos again. This time encourage students to include specific concepts from the video and incorporate vocabulary terms in their doodles.
5. Have students share and discuss their doodles in pairs.

DISCUSSION: BIG IDEAS DEBRIEF

1. How did the first Black patent holders influence our country and society today?
2. How do the legacies of Lewis Latimer, Sarah Boone, Thomas Jennings, Sarah Goode, Garrett Morgan, Jan Matzeliger and Judy Reed live on today?
3. How will you learn more about Black inventors and patent holders?

DO NEXT

WHAT Students extend and share their learning with others.

WHEN Use after viewing and discussing.

HOW Ask students to try one or more of the following activities.

EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY. Think about the inventions you learned about in the videos, like the stoplight and the ironing board. What other tools or machines improve the quality of life daily for Americans? Pick one and research who invented it. Share what you find with someone.

CREATE AN ORIGINAL PIECE OF ART. Showcase what you learned about Black inventors and patent holders by telling a discovery story through an original piece of art (visual art, music, drama, poetry, dance). Share your original artwork with someone.

UNCOVER THE UNKNOWN. Highlight your new learning from the videos. Plan and carry out an investigation of other African American patent holders using the *Student-led Inquiry & Research* activity.

RELATED RESOURCES

[Sketchnoting](#) explainer video

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

19th CENTURY BLACK DISCOVERIES

MAIN IDEA / GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What do Lewis Latimer and Sarah Boone have in common? *Answer:* Latimer and Boone are innovative Black inventors who transformed their respective fields, paving the way for other Black inventors.

INFERENCES Why might American students have learned about Thomas Edison but not Lewis Latimer? *Answer:* Latimer was a Black man, and Black people, historically, have not been recognized for their contributions.

FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PATENT HOLDERS

MAIN IDEA / GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who were the first African Americans to receive patents? *Answers:* Thomas Jennings (dry scouring), Judy Reed (dough kneeder) and Garrett Morgan (traffic light) were the first African Americans to receive patents.

KEY DETAILS What are some innovations and inventions created by Black people mentioned in the video? *Answer:* Traffic light, gas mask, shoemaking machine, folding bed.

INFERENCES What important decision did Garrett Morgan make about his invention, the traffic light? *Answer:* To sell his invention to General Electric because he, as an African American, wouldn't have the same access to the market.

Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

LEWIS LATIMER (1848 – 1928) was a skilled draftsman and inventor who designed several improvements for light bulbs and contributed to the patenting of the telephone. *Source:* Luvenia George, Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation

SARAH BOONE (1832 – 1904) was one of the first African American women to receive a U.S. patent for her improvements to the ironing board that made it more appropriate for use with women's clothing. *Source:* Daniel Helton, BlackPast

THOMAS JENNINGS (1791 – 1859) was the first African American to be granted a patent for his invention of a process he called "dry-scouring," a precursor to what we now call dry cleaning. *Source:* National Inventors Hall of Fame

JUDY W. REED (1826 – ?) is considered to be the first African American woman to receive a U.S. patent. In January of 1884, Reed applied for a patent on her "Dough Kneader and Roller," a design that improved upon existing technology by mixing the dough more evenly and protecting it from dust particles during the rolling process. *Source:* Carla Garner, BlackPast

GARRETT MORGAN (1877 – 1963) was one of the country's most successful African American inventors. Among other inventions, he developed the three-position traffic signal, an early version of the gas mask and also patented a hair-straightening product. *Source:* U.S. Department of Transportation

SARAH GOODE (1855 – 1905) was one of the first African American women to obtain a U.S. patent for her invention of a folding cabinet bed that made efficient use of small spaces. *Source:* Amy Essington, BlackPast

JAN MATZELIGER (1852 – 1889) was best known for inventing a machine that shaped the upper portions of shoes, a process called "shoe-lasting." He was the son of a Dutch father and a black Surinamese mother. *Source:* Britannica

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

GENERAL ELECTRIC is an American multinational company best known for its work in the power, renewable energy, aviation and healthcare industries.

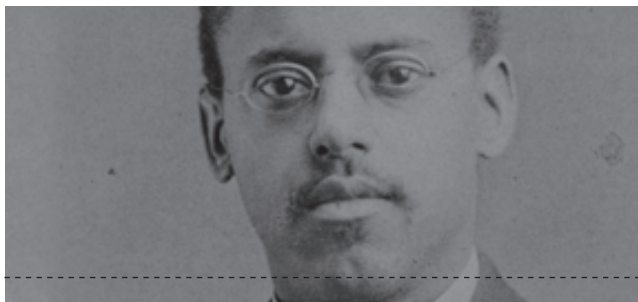
UNITED STATES ELECTRIC LIGHTING COMPANY was an early utility company, formed in 1878 after a merger with the Weston Electric Light Company. It later became a subsidiary of Westinghouse.

U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO), an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, registers trademarks and grants patents on inventions. The office protects the interests of both inventors and businesses.

FOCAL POINT

Lewis Latimer taught himself mechanical drawing while working in a patent office. Those skills would lay the foundation for his achievements as an inventor.

FROM 19TH CENTURY BLACK DISCOVERIES



SUCCESSES UNSEEN



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 6-8, 9-12

In this lesson, students will learn about the legacy of Booker T. Washington, the celebrated orator and visionary who recognized that investing in the economic power of Black Americans would lead to successes unseen.

This lesson also explores how the journey of African Americans who sought knowledge and formal education led to the establishment of institutions that are still prominent today. Using *African American Higher Education* and the teachings of Booker T. Washington as context, this lesson also encourages students to consider and discuss legislation intended to give Black people equal access to a society that claims to embrace the idea of opportunity for all but often falls short.

KEY FIGURES

- Booker T. Washington
- John Chavis
- Mary Jane Patterson
- Lyndon B. Johnson
- Allan Bakke

KEY PLACES

- Wilberforce College
- Lincoln University
- Cheyney University
- Tuskegee Institute
- Howard University

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How do our identities change as society around us becomes more diverse?
2. How do social inequities influence our lived experiences?
3. How have African Americans worked to change society throughout history?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The value society places on diversity depends on social, cultural, political and historical contexts.
2. Opportunity is not enough to ensure civil rights for disadvantaged or marginalized members of society.
3. African Americans throughout history have recognized that investing in yourself leads to greater access and success for Black people everywhere.

Procedure

VIEW

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

CLOSE READING: DOODLES

WHAT Students make predictions about how multiple texts relate and what might follow.

WHEN Use during viewing.

HOW

1. Distribute the *Thinking Through Viewing* graphic organizer.
2. Share the lists of key people and key places with

students. Ask students to share and record what they know about the people and places on the lists.

3. Post and consider the essential questions.

- *How do our identities change as society around us becomes more diverse?*
- *How do social inequities impact our lived experiences?*
- *How have African Americans worked to change society throughout history?*

4. Watch the videos. Instruct students to add to the list of things they know about the key people and places as they view.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON WAS A LEADING AFRICAN AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL WHO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION.



5. Have students watch the videos a second time, pausing after each video to answer the questions:

- *What do I know about the people named in this video?*
- *What more do I need to know about...?*
- *What do I want to know more about...?*

6. Chart students' responses to the questions for each video side-by-side in a visible location.

7. Then, check for understanding. For each video, ask, "What is the central message?" Have students record their responses in the *Thinking Through Viewing* graphic organizer. Add new responses to the group chart as necessary.

8. Next, record connections among the videos. Ask students, "How do the videos overlap? What do they have in common?"

9. Finally, have students return to the *Thinking Through Viewing* graphic organizer to complete the summary independently.

DISCUSSION: BIG IDEAS DEBRIEF

Facilitate dialogue among students. Invite students to reference or add to their *Thinking Through Viewing* handout as they discuss.

1. How does Booker T. Washington's legacy live on today?
2. Why are affirmative action conversations sometimes contentious?
3. How will you learn more about the origins and impact of African American higher education?

DO NEXT: KEEP THINKING

WHAT Students extend and share their learning with others.

WHEN Use after viewing and discussing.

HOW Students can extend the whole class conversation, reflect in writing in a journal entry, or invite members of their family or community to ongoing dialogue about the videos *Booker T. Washington*, *African American Higher Education* and *Affirmative Action* using these Keep Thinking questions.

Video	Keep Thinking
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON	What is the difference between being treated unfairly by another person and being discriminated against by society at large?
AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION	What is challenging about respecting everyone's rights when people are different from each other?
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	In what ways does collective action build solidarity? In what ways does solidarity lead to collective action?

RELATED RESOURCES

Thinking Through Viewing handout

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

KEY DETAILS What is Booker T. Washington known for? *Answer:* Booker T. Washington is known for advocating for African Americans to gain economic power through industrial education, principally through his work at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

INFERENCES How was Booker T. Washington a complex historical figure? *Answer:* Although he advised

African Americans to make the best of their current circumstances (“cast down your bucket where you are”), behind the scenes, he funded anti-discrimination lawsuits challenging Jim Crow policies.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

KEY DETAILS Which institutions were the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)? *Answer:* Wilberforce University in Ohio, Lincoln University and Cheyney University in Pennsylvania.

INFERENCES Why were these first institutions of higher education for African Americans important? *Answer:*

Educational opportunities, especially in higher education, were quite limited for African Americans. HBCUs created opportunities and continue to provide campus climates that are welcoming and affirming to African American students.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

KEY DETAILS In what year did the freshman class at Yale University admit the largest number of Black students up to that point? *Answer:* September 1969

Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (1856 – 1915) was a leading African American intellectual who stressed the importance of industrial education. Born into slavery, he attended the Hampton Institute, a school for formerly enslaved people, and went on to found Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) in 1881 and the National Negro Business League two decades later. *Source:* history.com

JOHN CHAVIS (1763 – 1838) was born a free Black man in North Carolina. In 1778, he enlisted as a soldier in the Revolutionary War, serving three years in the 5th Virginia Regiment. He became a circuit-riding missionary preacher in 1800 and, later, opened a school for Black and white students at his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. *Source:* Washington and Lee University

FOCAL POINT

Cheyney University in Pennsylvania was the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Founded in 1837 as the Institute of Colored Youth, it transformed educational possibility for African American people.

FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

MARY JANE PATTERSON (1840 – 1894) was the first Black woman to receive a B.A. degree from an established American college (Oberlin College in 1862). Her achievements as a pioneering Black scholar and a leading Black educator continue to influence Black students today. *Source:* African American Registry



LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1908 – 1973) was the 36th President of the United States who took office after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He was known for furthering many progressive reforms, including key civil rights legislation. *Source:* history.com

ALLAN BAKKE (1940 –) is a white California man who sued the University of California, Davis, after twice unsuccessfully applying for admission to the medical school. Bakke claimed that, because his grades and test scores were higher than those of minority students who had been accepted, he had suffered “reverse discrimination.” The Supreme Court found that the university’s use of racial quotas was unconstitutional but held that race could be used as a factor in admissions decisions and that promoting diversity in education was justified. Bakke was ultimately admitted to the medical school.

Source: Britannica

KEY PLACES

WILBERFORCE COLLEGE was America’s first private Historically Black College and University (HBCU) founded by African Americans.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY (originally established as The Ashmun Institute) in Pennsylvania became the nation’s first degree-granting HBCU when it received its charter in 1854.

CHEYNEY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA became the nation’s first HBCU in 1837. The University was established through the bequest of Richard Humphreys,

a Quaker philanthropist who bequeathed \$10,000 to design and establish a school to educate people of African descent and prepare them as teachers.

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE (now known as Tuskegee University) is a private university located in Tuskegee, Alabama, and one of the largest HBCUs in the United States. It was founded by Lewis Adams, a former enslaved person, and George W. Campbell, a former enslaver, in 1881. Booker T. Washington, then a 25-year-old teacher at Hampton Institute in Virginia, was named its first principal, a position he maintained until his death in 1915.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY was founded as a theological school in 1866. Named after Oliver Otis Howard, a white Union Civil War general and commissioner of the **Freedmen's Bureau**, the institution was committed to graduate and professional education, in contrast to most other Black postsecondary institutions of that era. It earned the nickname “the Capstone of Negro Education.”

BLACK ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 6-8, 9-12

Students will explore how the Harlem Renaissance, the iconic cultural revolution of the 1920s, set the stage for Black art and entertainment's greatest writers, artists and musicians for decades to come. They will learn how Black music evolved over the 20th century, birthing new sounds and exciting venues for dance and entertainment. They will also become familiar with the cultural fusion of jazz music, the influential television show *Soul Train* and the rise of hip-hop from house parties on the streets of Bronx, New York.

KEY FIGURES

- **MUSICIANS** Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith, Mamie Smith, James Reese Witherspoon, Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton
- **WRITERS** Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, Alain Locke
- **DJS AND HOSTS** Don Cornelius, DJ Kool Herc
- **HIP-HOP ARTISTS AND MCS** The SugarHill Gang, Grandmaster Flash, Public Enemy

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why are Black arts and Black entertainment critical parts of American history?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of its Black artists and entertainers?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Black musicians, artists, producers, filmmakers and writers have fundamentally shaped arts and entertainment in the United States.
2. Black Americans have not only improved daily life for all Americans but have laid the foundation for other talented creators in the entertainment industry.

Procedure

VIEW

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

THE BIRTH OF JAZZ

SOUL TRAIN

THE BIRTH OF HIP-HOP *(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)*

CLOSE READING: 4 A'S PROTOCOL

WHAT Students write and reflect on their own connections to the videos.

WHEN Use during viewing.

HOW

1. Introduce students to these four questions:

- *What assumptions does the speaker/writer of the video hold?*
- *What do you agree with in the video?*
- *What do you want to argue with in the video?*

- *What parts of the video do you aspire to or want to act upon?*

2. Have students watch the videos at least twice. Encouraging them to read the captions to support their learning and to consider the four questions as they watch.

3. Ask students to write answers and reflections to the four questions while they watch the videos. They can use a piece of paper, an electronic document or the *4 A's Protocol* graphic organizer. Prompt them to focus on the following concepts from the video in responses: direct quotes, main idea(s), details, personal connections and new learnings.

4. Encourage students to share their notes with a partner.

DISCUSSION: BIG IDEAS DEBRIEF

1. How do the pioneering works and art of Black artists, past and present, continue to influence our country and society today?



JAZZ IS A UNIQUELY AFRICAN AMERICAN FORM OF MUSIC THAT BLENDS AFRICAN, LATIN AND EUROPEAN STYLES. ALTHOUGH EARLY JAZZ MUSIC WAS CONSIDERED “IMMORAL” BY SOME CRITICS, IT BECAME A POPULAR AND INFLUENTIAL FORM OF EXPRESSION THAT HAS ENDURED AND EVOLVED FOR OVER A CENTURY.

2. What connections can you make among jazz, hip-hop, the Harlem Renaissance and *Soul Train*?

DO NEXT: KEEP THINKING

WHAT Students extend and share their learning with others.

WHEN Use after viewing and discussing.

HOW Ask students to try one or both of the following activities.

EXPLORE MEDIA YOU ENJOY. Where and how do you observe Black artists and entertainers influencing popular culture today? Explore social media platforms, television channels, movies and news sources. Look for Black artists and entertainers. Record what you find and share what you find with someone.

CREATE AN ORIGINAL PIECE OF ART. Showcase what you learned about Black arts and entertainment. Produce an original art (visual art, music, drama, poetry, dance) to convey what you learned. Plan a public showcase of your original work.

RELATED RESOURCES

[Explanation of the Four “A”s Text Protocol from School Reform Initiative](#)

[4 A’s Protocol](#) graphic organizer

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What was the Harlem Renaissance? *Answer:* An iconic cultural period in African American history in New York during the 1920s, when Black artists, writers and musicians flourished.

KEY DETAILS Who were some Black artists who rose to prominence because of their bold, exciting music? *Answer:* Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith, Mamie Smith.

INFERENCES Why was the Harlem Renaissance a pivotal influence in New Negro Movement? *Answer:* Writers shared Black lived experiences; Black artists could finally be their full authentic selves.

THE BIRTH OF JAZZ

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING How did jazz come to fruition? *Answer:* New Orleans was a cultural melting pot where African, Latin and European forms and styles of music were played, largely by African American musicians and artists.

KEY DETAILS Who were some famous jazz artists, singers and musicians? *Answer:* Louis Armstrong, James Reese Europe, Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton

INFERENCES What was controversial about jazz music at its founding? *Answer:* It was played in New Orleans’ red-light district, which associated the music with promiscuity.

SOUL TRAIN

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What is *Soul Train*? *Answer:* *Soul Train* was a variety television show created and hosted by radio host Don Cornelius. Featuring mostly Black dancers and entertainers, it became a cultural phenomenon.

KEY DETAILS What did *Soul Train* bring to American homes? *Answer:* Black music, culture and regional dances; Black love, peace and soul; it showed Black teenagers more positively than they were portrayed in the national news.

INFERENCES What was revolutionary about *Soul Train*? *Answer:* It was a Black program created by Black people. It showed Black people and Black culture in a positive way. It is one of the longest running syndicated TV programs in American history.

THE BIRTH OF HIP-HOP (publication forthcoming; check website for updates)

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who is credited with starting hip-hop and how was it started? *Answer:* DJ Kool Herc threw a party in the Bronx where he used a turntable to create a new sound called “the break.”

KEY DETAILS How did hip-hop start spreading during its early days in New York City? *Answer:* On the streets, also known as the underground, rappers would rhyme over boombox beats. Eventually, cassette tapes would spread hand to hand, and soon hip-hop found itself on the radio.

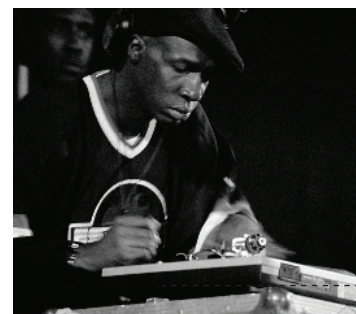
INFERENCES How is hip-hop more than a musical genre?

FOCAL POINT

Hip-hop music emerged from the work of creative DJs like Grandmaster Flash who hosted house parties and outdoor block parties in the Bronx.

FROM THE BIRTH OF HIP-HOP

Answer: Hip-hop artists report and comment on the social, political and cultural experiences of African Americans.



Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

LOUIS ARMSTRONG (1901 – 1971) was a legendary trumpeter, bandleader, singer, soloist, film star and comedian. With his great sensitivity, technique and capacity to express emotion, Armstrong not only ensured the survival of jazz but led in its development into a fine art. *Source:* [Britannica](#)

DUKE ELLINGTON (1899 – 1974) was a pianist widely recognized as the greatest jazz composer and bandleader of his time. One of the originators of big-band jazz, Ellington led his band for more than half a century, composed thousands of scores, and created one of the most distinctive ensemble sounds in all of Western music. *Source:* [Britannica](#)

BESSIE SMITH (1894 – 1937) was a 20th century blues singer whose performances combined “field holler and Jazz Age sophistication.” Known as the “Empress of the Blues,” she made an indelible artistic impression on both jazz and rock ‘n’ roll musicians. *Source:* [Gwen Thompkins, National Public Radio](#)

MAMIE SMITH (1883 – 1946) was an actress and performing artist, considered by industry scholars to have made the very first blues recording, “Crazy Blues,” in 1920. The recording also represented the emergence of Black female singers into popular music culture. *Source:* [Carla Garner, BlackPast](#)

JIMMY WITHERSPOON (1920 – 1997) was one of the best “blues shouters.” He joined his parents’ church choir at age five, an experience he credited for shaping a musical career that spanned five decades. *Source:* [National Public Radio](#)

BUDDY BOLDEN

(1877 – 1931) was a cornet player known as one of the first legends of jazz. One of the original sounds of New Orleans-style music, Bolden led the most successful band in New Orleans and was a leading figure in the rise of New Orleans-style ragtime music that would later be known as jazz. *Source:* [Matt Micucci, Jazziz magazine](#)

JELLY ROLL MORTON (1890 – 1941) was a legendary jazz composer and pianist who pioneered the use of prearrangements in jazz-band performances while still allowing for improvisation. He is considered an innovator in the transition from early jazz to orchestral jazz. *Source:* [Britannica](#)

LANGSTON HUGHES (1902 – 1967) was a poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist and playwright of the Harlem Renaissance and beyond. His work captured the celebrations and sorrows of working-class Black lives, avoiding both “sentimental idealization and negative stereotypes.” *Source:* [Poetry Foundation](#)

ZORA NEALE HURSTON (1891 – 1960) was a highly influential writer and anthropologist. Her novels, short stories and plays often depicted African American life in the South, while her anthropological studies examined Black folklore. *Source:* [National Women's History Museum](#)

COUNTEE CULLEN (1903 – 1946) was a poet of the Harlem Renaissance who came to believe that art transcended race. Because of Cullen’s success in both Black and white cultures, he thought of his poetry as a vehicle that could be used to minimize the distance between Black and white people. In 1928, he married Nina Yolande DuBois, daughter of W.E.B. DuBois. *Source:* [Poetry Foundation](#)

ALAIN LOCKE (1885 – 1954) is heralded as the “Father of the Harlem Renaissance.” In 1925, he published *The New Negro*, an anthology of poetry, essays, plays, music and portraiture by white and Black artists. Locke, a Harvard graduate and the first African American Rhodes Scholar, was an enormously influential philosopher, theorist, critic and interpreter of African American literature and art. [Source: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

DON CORNELIUS (1936 – 2012) was the creator, owner, producer and host of the pioneering television show *Soul Train*, which ran for 35 years and showcased many Black musicians and dancers who were often ignored by white variety shows. *Soul Train* brought a partylike atmosphere to millions of homes around the country. [Source: Jennifer Medina, New York Times](#)

DJ KOOL HERC (1955 –) became an artistic force in the early 1970s when he became known for DJing and rapping in the South Bronx. He is widely credited as the originator of the “breakbeat” technique and of hip-hop. [Source: TeachRock](#)

THE SUGARHILL GANG was the first group to issue a hip-hop record, and their hit single “Rapper’s Delight” (1979) remains influential to this day. Prior to this recording hip-hop was only performed live, mostly at house parties. [Source: John Bush, AllMusic](#)

GRANDMASTER FLASH (1958 –) was a pioneering hip-hop DJ in the Bronx. As the leader of the group Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, he invented many of the recording and performance techniques associated with hip-hop DJing. [Source: Greg Tate, Britannica](#)

PUBLIC ENEMY is a hip-hop group formed in 1982 on Long Island, New York. With Chuck D’s booming voice, Flava Flav’s comedy and Terminator X’s DJ skills, the group brought radical Black political ideology to pop music on albums including *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988) and *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990). [Source: Greg Tate, Britannica](#)

LEADING THE REVOLUTION



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 6-8, 9-12

In this lesson, students will discover how Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale and other Black leaders sparked and sustained racial and social justice movements that continue to resonate in American society today. They will explore how the leaders of revolutionary social movements focused on uniting Black people around the world and prioritized social programs, such as free medical clinics, clothing drives and breakfast programs for children.

KEY FIGURES

- Marcus Garvey
- Malcolm X
- Elijah Muhammad
- President Lyndon B Johnson
- Stokely Carmichael
- Bobby Seale
- Huey P. Newton

KEY LEGISLATION

- Voting Rights Act of 1965

FOCAL POINT

Although the Black Panthers extended tremendous energy on social programs to benefit the Black community, their legacy is often remembered only as one of militant resistance.

FROM THE BIRTH OF THE BLACK PANTHERS

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

- Universal Negro Improvement Association
- Black Panther Party (or Black Panther Party for Self-Defense)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How have Black leaders sparked and sustained racial and social justice movements throughout history?
2. How does American society benefit from the contributions of its Black political and social leaders?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Black Power movements were led by revolutionary leaders who made significant contributions to social and political movements in the United States.
2. Black Power movements transformed many areas of life for Black Americans by fostering political activism and influence, inspiring Black arts movements, and encouraging Black people to proudly embrace their culture and identities.

Procedure

VIEW

MARCUS GARVEY *(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)*

MALCOLM X: HOW DID HE INSPIRE A MOVEMENT?

BLACK POWER

THE BIRTH OF THE BLACK PANTHERS

INFORMATION PROCESSING: FIRST TURN, LAST TURN PROTOCOL

WHAT Students explore and discover information from videos through group sharing

WHEN Use during and after viewing.

HOW

1. Post the essential questions in a visible location.
2. Have students watch the videos at least one time. Encourage them to read the captions to support learning.
3. Instruct them to note three to four observations on a piece of paper, electronic document or *General*



MARCUS GARVEY WAS THE FOUNDER AND LEADER OF UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, WHICH WAS CREATED TO UNITE ALL BLACK PEOPLE ACROSS WORLD. HE AND HIS ORGANIZATION INFLUENCED THE “BACK TO AFRICA” AND BLACK NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS.

Notetaking graphic organizer. Observations may include direct quotes, main idea(s), details, personal connections, new learnings or questions.

4. Put students into small groups of four to eight to process the information from the videos.
5. Tell students to decide which group member will take the first turn. Have that person share one of the items from their notes without offering commentary.
6. Next, each group member comments on the item that was shared one at a time, in round-robin fashion, with no cross talk.
7. The first person who shared the item from their notes now shares their thinking about the item, thus getting the last turn.
8. The next person in the group then shares an item from their notes, followed by round-robin comments with no cross talk. Repeat until every group member shares at least one item.
9. Repeat the process for each video.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CROSSTALK

After engaging in the *First Turn, Last Turn* protocol, give students the opportunity to crosstalk with their small group about their round-robin sharing. Ask them:

1. What common themes did you discover in this group of videos?
2. What connections did you make to the essential questions?
3. What questions do you still have?

EXTEND YOUR LEARNING: DISCOVER BLACK SCHOLARS

Each video features a Black scholar or academic who shares historical context with the audience. It’s important to read and learn from Black experts in their respective fields. Take time to research the works of the scholars featured in this group of videos. Consider tracking what you learn using the *Student-led Inquiry & Research* graphic organizer.

WHAT Students discover modern Black scholars by exploring their work.

WHEN After watching videos.

1. Armstrong Williams – political commentator
2. Peniel Joseph – University of Texas
3. Farah Griffin – Columbia University
4. Hasan Jeffries – The Ohio State University
5. Kathleen Cleaver – former Communications Secretary of the Black Panther Party

RELATED RESOURCES

First Turn/Last Turn Protocol

General Notetaking activity and graphic organizer
Student-led Inquiry & Research activity and graphic organizer

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

MARCUS GARVEY (publication forthcoming; check website for updates)

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who was Marcus Garvey? *Answer:* Garvey is the founder and leader of Universal Negro Improvement Association, which was created to unite all Black people across world. He and his organization influenced the Back to Africa and Black Nationalist movements.

KEY DETAILS What did Marcus Garvey establish to carry out his vision of Black people reclaiming Africa? *Answer:* He established the Black Star Line, a steamship line used to transport African Americans interested in emigrating to Africa.

INFERENCES What was radical about Marcus Garvey's message at the time? *Answer:* He was a charismatic Black man encouraging Black pride and challenging African Americans to reclaim Africa at a time when lynching was rampant.

MALCOLM X: HOW DID HE INSPIRE A MOVEMENT?

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who was Malcolm X and how did his message differ from other civil rights leaders? *Answer:* Malcolm X was inspired by the Nation of Islam and embraced empowerment "by any means necessary." He inspired the Black Nationalist movement

through his focus on Black self-defense and Black power.

KEY DETAILS How did Malcolm X's ideologies inform Black Power movement? *Answer:* He demanded Black dignity and self-respect; for example, he encouraged replacing words like *negro* and *colored* with *Black* and *Afro American*.

BLACK POWER

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Why did Stokely Carmichael's message resonate when Dr. King's message of nonviolence was wearing thin? *Answer:* Because violence was everywhere, and Carmichael encouraged people to not be afraid to seek Black power.

INFERENCES What were some of the multiple meanings of "Black Power"? *Answer:* Power in elected office; power in self-determination; power in education; arts and culture focused on positive Black identity; an end to nonviolence as the only organizing strategy.

THE BIRTH OF THE BLACK PANTHERS

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What was the Black Panther Party? *Answer:* It was a social program launched by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton to serve the Black community and defend it from racism and violence, including police brutality.

KEY DETAILS What are the lesser-known programs of the Black Panther Party? *Answer:* Free medical care; free clothing drives; free breakfast for school children. All three later informed federal programs.

Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

MARCUS GARVEY (1887 – 1940) was a Jamaican-born Black nationalist and founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) who created a "Back to Africa" movement in the United States. His message of race pride attracted thousands and inspired later civil rights activists. *Source:* BBC History

MALCOLM X (1925 – 1965) was a Nation of Islam leader who articulated concepts of race pride and militant Black nationalism in the early 1960s. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, published after his death in 1965, made him an ideological hero, especially among Black youth. *Source:* Lawrence A. Mamiya, Britannica

ELIJAH MUHAMMAD (1897 – 1975) was a prominent leader of the Nation of Islam beginning in the mid-1930s. His message mixed Black pride, denunciation



FOCAL POINT

Malcolm X's theories and philosophies about Black dignity and self-defense formed the foundation for Black Power ideology.

FROM MALCOLM X

of white supremacy and the need for Black economic independence. [Source: American Experience, PBS](#)

LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1908 – 1973) was the 36th President of the United States who took office after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He was known for furthering many progressive reforms, including key civil rights legislation. [Source: history.com](#)

STOKELY CARMICHAEL (1941 – 1998) was a West-Indian-born civil rights activist and leading proponent of Black nationalism in the United States in the 1960s. He played a key role in orienting the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) toward “Black Power,” a rallying slogan he originated. [Source: Britannica](#)

HUEY P. NEWTON (1942 – 1989) was the Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party as well as the co-founder (with Bobby Seale). The Party believed that the Black struggle for justice meant protecting Black communities from racism and violence as well as providing material support for poor people and families. [Source: African American Heritage, National Archives](#)

BOBBY SEALE (1936 –) is an African American political activist and co-founder, with Huey P. Newton, of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. He was one of a generation of young Black radicals who broke away from the traditionally nonviolent Civil Rights Movement, instead espousing militant Black empowerment. [Source: Britannica](#)

KEY LEGISLATION

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 aimed to increase the number of people registered to vote in areas where there was a record of previous discrimination by outlawing literacy tests and providing for the appointment of federal examiners. It prevented such jurisdictions from changing voting practices or procedures without “preclearance” from either the U.S. Attorney General or the District Court for Washington, DC. It shifted the power to register voters from state and local officials to the federal government. [Source: Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives](#)

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA) represented the largest mass movement in African American history at that time. Proclaiming a political, economic and religious Black nationalist “Back to Africa” message, Marcus Garvey and the UNIA established 700 branches in 38 states by the early 1920s. [Source: David Van Leeuwen, National Humanities Center](#)

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY (originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense) was a political organization founded in Oakland in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to challenge police brutality and empower African Americans to defend and care for themselves. Their influential “Ten Point Program” called for an immediate end to police brutality; employment for African Americans; and land, housing and justice for all. The Party also started popular community social programs, including free breakfast programs for school children and free health clinics. [Source: History.com](#)

INJUSTICE & MEDIA



WARNING The videos upon which this lesson is based contain graphic images. Viewer discretion is advised.

TARGET GRADE LEVELS 9-12 (DUE TO GRAPHIC CONTENT)

In this lesson, students will learn about the first Black newspaper and how the Black press became an outlet for resistance movements and a medium for Black Americans to speak truth to power. They will learn about the terrorism of lynching—a grotesque form of mob-rule white people used to control Black communities—and meet Ida B. Wells, a prominent investigative journalist who documented hundreds of lynchings. They will learn about how the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) organized the resistance against the racist film *The Birth of a Nation* using the Black press to spread its campaign. And they will learn about Oscar Micheaux, the first major Black filmmaker to produce and direct his own films, including a film that directly challenged the racism depicted in *The Birth of a Nation*.

KEY FIGURES

- **EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS** Samuel Cornish, John Russwurm, Frederick Douglass, Pauline Hopkins, W.E.B DuBois, John H Johnson
- **JOURNALISTS & WRITERS** Ida B. Wells
- **VICTIMS OF LYNCHING** Emmett Till, Michael Donald, Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, William “Henry” Stewart
- **MOTHERS** Mamie Till, Beulah Mae Donald
- **FILMMAKERS** Oscar Micheaux, Spike Lee, John Singleton, Julie Dash

KEY MEDIA & PUBLICATIONS

- “Southern Horrors Lynch Law in All Its Phases” by Ida B. Wells
- **NEWSPAPERS** *Freedom’s Journal*, *The North Star*
- **MAGAZINES** *The Colored American*, *Ebony*, *Jet*
- **JOURNALS** *The Crisis*

- **FILMS** *The Birth of a Nation*, *The Homesteader*, *Within Our Gates*

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

- NAACP

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How have Black writers and producers used their craft and influence to shed light on racial and social injustice?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of its Black writers, reporters and producers?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. American media and popular culture have been influenced by the Black press and its prominent writers, publishers and filmmakers for centuries.
2. Black writers, publishers and filmmakers consistently use their craft and influence to provide a platform for dissenting voices that push America forward.

Procedure

VIEW

THE BLACK PRESS
LYNCHING

IDA B. WELLS : FEARLESS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER OF SOUTHERN HORRORS

THE BIRTH OF A NATION AND THE ORIGINS

OF THE NAACP *(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)*

OSCAR MICHEAUX *(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)*

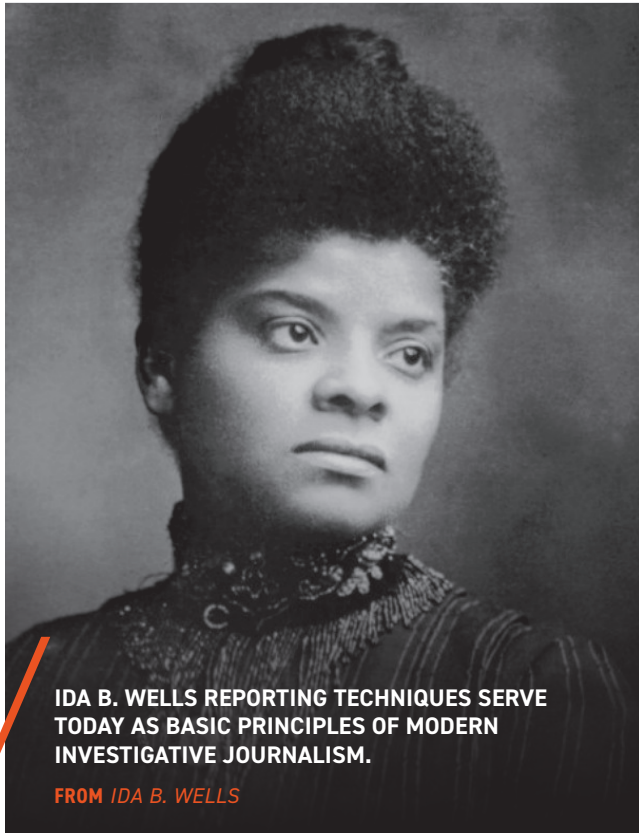
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: SAY SOMETHING PROTOCOL

WHAT Students construct meaning from video content and reflect on connections between new learning and current understandings.

WHEN Use during and after viewing.

HOW

1. Have students watch each video and interact with



IDA B. WELLS REPORTING TECHNIQUES SERVE TODAY AS BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MODERN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM.

FROM IDA B. WELLS

the content by taking notes. Notes can include a brief summary, key details, interesting ideas, a question, new learning or a personal connection. Prepare students to “Say Something” to a partner after watching each video.

2. After watching the first video, have students find a partner.
3. Instruct each partner to say something about the first video. Responses should be succinct, thoughtful and related to the video content. Students can refer to their notes.
4. Prompt students to repeat this process for each video in this group, finding a new partner each time.

Note: Consider spacing out this activity. It’s important to take a breath, take time to personally reflect, then connect with others after watching videos containing brutal images of violence.

GROUP DEBRIEF: WRITING FOR JUSTICE

After engaging in the Say Something protocol, give students the opportunity to debrief big ideas with their partner or in a small group. Post these essential questions where everyone can see them:

1. How have Black writers and producers used their craft and influence to shed light on racial and social injustice?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of its Black writers, reporters and producers?

DO NEXT

Ask students to research a modern social issue and create something based on their learning that sheds light on the issue and challenges the audience to make change. Possibilities include an op-ed, visual art, a social media campaign or content for another media channel of their choice.

EXTEND YOUR LEARNING: DISCOVER BLACK SCHOLARS

Each video features a Black scholar or academic who shares historical context with the audience. It’s important to read and learn from Black experts in their respective fields. Take time to research the works of the scholars featured in this group of videos. Consider tracking what you learn using the *Student-led Inquiry & Research* graphic organizer.

WHAT Students discover modern Black scholars by exploring their work.

WHEN After watching videos.

1. Bryan Stevenson – Equal Justice Initiative
2. Farah Griffin – Columbia University
3. Imani Perry – Princeton University
4. Vincent Brown – Harvard University
5. Mia Bay – University of Pennsylvania
6. Paula Giddings – Smith College
7. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham – Harvard University
8. Donald Bogle – New York University & University of Pennsylvania

RELATED RESOURCES

[Say Something Protocol from Expeditionary Learning](#)
[General Note-Taking Activity](#) graphic organizer
[Ida B. Wells “Southern Horrors: Lynch Law In All Its Phases”](#)

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

THE BLACK PRESS

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING How was *Freedom’s Journal* important in establishing the Black press?
Answer: It proved there was Black readership for Black publications in the U.S.

KEY DETAILS Who were key figures and publications in establishing the Black press? **Answer:** Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm of *Freedom’s Journal*; Frederick Douglass of *The North Star*; Pauline Hopkins of *The Colored American*; *Jet*; *Ebony*.

INFERENCES Why is the Black press important? **Answer:** It gave Black writers a platform to speak truth to power; it gave African Americans a voice outside of mainstream media; and it allowed Black people to share their own stories.

LYNCHING

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What is lynching? *Answer:* Lynching refers to acts of domestic terror, including a grotesque form of mob rule without judge or jury. During lynchings, Black people were hanged and burned in public as a way to incite terror and fear among Black communities.

KEY DETAILS What infamous lynching catalyzed the Civil Rights Movement? *Answer:* Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black boy who was kidnapped and murdered after being accused of accosting a white woman. His mother demanded an open casket to show his brutalized body to the world.

INFERENCES What role did Black women and mothers play when lynching was at its peak? *Answer:* Emmett Till's mother demanding an open casket helped start a social movement; Ida B. Wells and her investigative reporting built the NAACP's platform; Michael Donald's mother fought the KKK at SCOTUS and won.

IDA B. WELLS: FEARLESS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER OF SOUTHERN HORRORS

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What is Ida B. Wells known for? *Answer:* She is known for her activism and investigative journalism on lynching in South; she used growing Black literacy to change the narrative and spread awareness about these ultra-violent crimes.

INFERENCES Why was Ida B. Wells' life in danger? Why was she eventually driven out of Memphis? *Answer:* She wrote and published anti-lynching articles and drew attention to the wrongful extralegal convictions of African Americans. This angered a white lynch mob who came to the newspaper office looking for Wells and threatening her life.

THE BIRTH OF A NATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE NAACP

(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What is *The Birth of a*

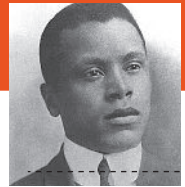
Nation? *Answer:* It was America's first full-length film. Although it was a technological advancement for the time, the film was racist propaganda steeped in tropes and stereotypes about Black people, especially casting Black men as dangerous.

KEY DETAILS How did the campaign against *The Birth of A Nation* galvanize the NAACP? *Answer:* The campaign garnered a great deal of support for the NAACP and grew its national prominence because people agreed with the stance that the film was blatantly racist.

FOCAL POINT

Long before Spike Lee, John Singleton and Julie Dash broke barriers for Black cinema, Oscar Micheaux became the first major Black filmmaker to produce and direct his own films.

FROM OSCAR MICHEAUX



OSCAR MICHEAUX

(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who was Oscar Micheaux? *Answer:* He was the first major Black filmmaker to independently write and produce his own films.

KEY DETAILS What is *The Homesteader*? *Answer:* It is a book written and published by Oscar Micheaux, which he eventually adapted into a silent film that he independently produced.

INFERENCES What is significant about Oscar Micheaux's work? *Answer:* It portrayed Black people in a way that challenged stereotypes during the era of *The Birth of a Nation*. It included strong, diverse characters and social themes that were not yet evident in mainstream media.

Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS

SAMUEL CORNISH (1795 – 1858) was an abolitionist and editor who co-founded (with John Russwurm) the nation's first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, in 1827. A Presbyterian minister who organized the first Black Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, Cornish later helped found the American Anti-Slavery Society among other abolitionist organizations.

Source: Robert Stirling, *BlackPast*

JOHN RUSSWURM (1799 – 1851) was an abolitionist,

publisher and colonizer of Liberia. He was also one of the first African American to graduate from an American college. As the co-founder of *Freedom's Journal*, Russwurm challenged the ways in which white media perpetuated stereotypes of African Americans.

Source: Kathleen Cairns, *BlackPast*

FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818 – 1895) was the most famous African American of the 19th century. He escaped slavery and achieved fame and respect in the North as an abolitionist lecturer and writer. He was the founder of the *North Star*, an abolitionist newspaper, and author of the seminal memoir *Narrative of the Life of Frederick*

Douglass (1845). Source: [The News Media and the Making of America 1730 – 1865, American Antiquarian Society](#)

PAULINE HOPKINS (1859 – 1930) was a pioneering author who explored social and racial themes in romantic novels. She reached a wide audience through numerous publications in the *Colored American* magazine, the widest circulating African American literary publication prior to the NAACP's *The Crisis*.

Source: [The Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins Society](#)

W. E. B. DUBOIS (1868 – 1963) was an African American writer, teacher, sociologist and activist. His writing, in particular the 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, shifted the way the way Black people were seen in American society, including the way Black citizens saw themselves. DuBois also co-founded the Niagara Movement and was an early leader of the NAACP, where served as the editor of the organization's newspaper *The Crisis*. Source: [history.com](#)

JOHN H. JOHNSON (1918 – 2005) founded the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago, IL, and is widely regarded as the most influential African American publisher in U.S. history. Johnson was the founding publisher of *Ebony* magazine, which launched in 1945 and remained the most popular African American magazine in the world for decades.

Source: [The History Makers](#)

JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS

IDA B. WELLS (1862 – 1931) was born into slavery and became a pioneering investigative journalist and activist. Beginning in the 1890s, her work brought international attention to the horrors of lynching of African Americans in the South. She helped launch the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), was a founding member of the NAACP and also campaigned for women's suffrage. Source: [Tyina Steptoe, BlackPast](#)

VICTIMS OF LYNCHING

EMMETT TILL (1941 – 1955) was a 14-year-old African American boy from Chicago who was lynched while visiting family in Money, Mississippi, in 1955. After Till allegedly insulted a white woman, Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam kidnapped, tortured and killed him, then threw his body into the Tallahatchie River. His mother, Mamie, insisted on an open casket at his funeral to show the nation the viciousness of her son's death.

Source: [Quin'nita F. Cobbins-Modica, BlackPast](#)

MICHAEL DONALD (1961 – 1981) was brutally murdered in Mobile, Alabama, in 1981 by Henry Hays and James Knowles, Ku Klux Klan members who were angry over the recent acquittal of a Black man for the

killing of a white police officer. They beat Donald, slit his throat and hung his body from a tree. The incident is sometimes referred to as "the last documented lynching in America." Source: [Leada Gore, al.com](#)

THOMAS MOSS, CALVIN MCDOWELL AND WILLIAM "HENRY" STEWART owned and managed the People's Grocery Company in Memphis, Tennessee, a Black-owned business that competed with a nearby white-owned store that formerly held a monopoly in the area. This angered the owners of the other store; some white men in the area also accused the People's Grocery of being a meeting place for Black men planning an attack on white residents. A white mob attacked the store, and the owners were arrested. The mob then broke the arrested men out of jail and lynched them. Ida B. Wells, a friend of the three murdered men, was deeply impacted by these murders. Source: [Equal Justice Initiative](#)

MOTHERS

MAMIE TILL (1921 – 2003) was the mother of lynching victim Emmett Till. She confronted the world with the brutality her young son endured by insisting on an open casket at his funeral. Source: [Rebekah Buchanan, Tri States Public Radio](#)

BEULAH MAE DONALD (1919 – 1988), whose son Michael Donald was lynched by the KKK, successfully advocated for her son's murders to be brought to justice after police were slow to respond. She also sued the KKK for Michael's murder, winning a settlement for \$7 million dollars that bankrupted the Klan in Alabama.

Source: [history.com](#)

FILMMAKERS

OSCAR MICHEAUX (1884 – 1951) was a pioneering African American author and independent filmmaker. He formed his own movie production company and, in 1919, released *The Homesteader*, the first film made by an African American. Source: [NAACP](#)

SPIKE LEE (1957 –) is an influential African American filmmaker, producer, screenwriter and actor who uses his movies to look critically at race relations, political issues, urban crime and violence. Lee's production company, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, has produced over 35 films since 1983. Source: [Robert Stirling, BlackPast](#)

JOHN SINGLETON (1968 – 2019) was an American film director and screenwriter whose films often examined urban and racial tensions. He was best known for his 1991 directorial debut *Boyz n the Hood*. Source: [Britannica](#)

JULIE DASH (1952 –) is a writer, producer and film

director. She received her highest acclaim for the 1991 film *Daughters of the Dust*, for which she also wrote the original screenplay. Dash is the first African American woman to have a full-length general theatrical release in the United States. [Source: The HistoryMakers](#)

KEY MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS

“SOUTHERN HORRORS: LYNCH LAW IN ALL ITS PHASES” is a pamphlet written by Ida B. Wells in 1892 documenting her investigations into the horrors of lynching. Based on eye-witness accounts and statistics gathered from newspapers all over the country, it is considered one of the first examples of investigative journalism and data reporting. [Source: Sarah Larson, JD Supra](#)

NEWSPAPERS

FREEDOM'S JOURNAL was the first Black-owned and operated newspaper in the United States. It was established in 1827, the same year that slavery was abolished in New York State. [Source: The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords, PBS](#)

THE NORTH STAR was an abolitionist newspaper founded by Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York, in 1847. In addition to offering a wide variety of news, it also reprinted documents and reader correspondence on slavery and abolitionist work, and material to support the diaspora of free Black people in the North. [Source: The News Media and the Making of America, 1730 – 1865, American Antiquarian](#)

MAGAZINES

THE COLORED AMERICAN was published from 1900 to 1909. Its editors and publishers included such prominent African Americans as Booker T. Washington and Pauline Hopkins, and it was one of the first general magazines that explicitly focused on Black history, biography, art, literature and culture. [Source: The Colored American](#)

EBONY was first launched in 1945 by the Chicago-based Johnson Publishing Company. Created by John H. Johnson, who modeled his publication after the pictorial news magazine *Life*, *Ebony* depicted positive stories and images of African American life and culture, avoiding stereotypes and inspiring readers to pursue personal success. [Source: Bruce Glasrud, BlackPast](#)

JET magazine was founded in 1951 by John H. Johnson and published by the Johnson Publishing Company. Initially billed as the “Weekly Negro News Magazine,” *Jet* was an important publication during the early Civil Rights Movement, documenting events such as the lynching of Emmett Till. Later, *Jet's* focus shifted toward Black popular culture. [Source: Robert Channick, Chicago Tribune](#)

JOURNALS

THE CRISIS was first published in 1910 as the official publication of the NAACP. Its founding editor W. E. B. DuBois used *The Crisis* to voice agitation toward white Americans while publishing important information and messages of pride to its African American readership. [Source: NAACP](#)

FILMS

THE BIRTH OF A NATION (1915) was a landmark in American filmmaking and the industry's first blockbuster. The storyline is racist propaganda that begins

FOCAL POINT

One of the most important early initiatives of the NAACP was organizing against the film *The Birth of a Nation* and the *Orgins of the NAACP*.

FROM THE BIRTH OF A NATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE NAACP

with the Civil War and ends with the Ku Klux Klan saving the South from Black rule during Reconstruction. [Source: All Things Considered, NPR](#)

THE HOMESTEADER was the first film by Oscar Micheaux and an adaptation of his 1917 autobiographical novel of the same name. The story is based on Micheaux's experiences as a South Dakota homesteader. [Source: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

WITHIN OUR GATES was a 1920 silent film directed by Oscar Micheaux that countered the racism of *The Birth of a Nation*. The film features a complex plot that captures the hardships of Black life during the Jim Crow era, pushes back against negative portrayals of African American in art and media, and champions the idea that racism is caused by ignorance. [Source: W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Perspectives on History](#)

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

NAACP is a civil rights organization founded in 1909 to advance justice for African Americans. W.E.B. DuBois and Ida B. Wells were among its founders. The NAACP's mission was and is to ensure the political, educational social and economic equality of all citizens of the United States and to eliminate race prejudice and racial discrimination. [Source: NAACP](#)

BLACK EXPLORATION



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 3-5, 6-8

In this lesson, students will learn about several Black explorers and pioneers who overcame unimaginable odds to explore the world around them and expand the boundaries of what is possible for Black people. They will meet Juan Garrido, the first African to set foot on what is now U.S. soil, who challenges our assumptions about Black people in the New World, and Esteban, an enslaved African brought to the Americas by Spanish conquistadors, who traveled over 15,000 miles on foot after a failed expedition. They will also learn about Matthew Henson, who was one of the first Westerners to reach the North Pole. And students will meet Guion Bluford and Mae Jemison, the first African American man and woman to go into space; Ronald McNair, a mission specialist; and Katherine Johnson, a mathematical genius who used her brilliance to break barriers in space while breaking gender and racial barriers on Earth.

KEY EXPLORERS

- **EARLY EXPLORERS** Juan Garrido, Ponce de León, Esteban, Matthew Henson
- **SPACE PIONEERS** Ronald McNair, Guion Bluford, Mae Jemison, Katherine Johnson

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How is Black exploration a critical part of Black history?
2. Why might Americans have learned about Ponce de

León or John Glenn but not pioneering Black explorers like Juan Garrido or Katherine Johnson?

3. How does American society benefit from the contributions of its Black explorers and pioneers of land, sea and space?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Black explorers and pioneers overcame unimaginable odds to expand the boundaries for what is possible for Black people.
2. Black Americans have improved daily life for all Americans and laid the foundation for other talented professionals in fields of exploration, science and technology.

Procedure

VIEW

JUAN GARRIDO (*publication forthcoming; check website for updates*)

BLACK EXPLORERS

KATHERINE JOHNSON

BEFORE VIEWING

1. Ask students to consider these questions.
 - *What does an explorer do?*
 - *Who are explorers?*
2. Instruct students to list the names of explorers they have heard about. Record the names in a place that is visible to the whole class.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: BEFORE/NOW

WHAT Students connect prior knowledge to new learning.

WHEN Use during viewing to make connections between what students know and new learning from the videos.

HOW

1. Have students watch the three videos on Black exploration.
2. For each video, ask them to use the *Before/Now* graphic organizer to answer the questions listed below using this sentence: *I used to think _____, but now I know _____.*
 - *What? What do I know about exploration?*
 - *Impact? How has exploration affected my life?*

I Used to Think...	Exploration	But Now I Think/Know...
	WHAT What do I know about exploration?	
	IMPACT How has exploration affected my life?	
	INFLUENCE How has Black exploration influenced other fields?	
	CHALLENGES What makes it harder for exploration to advance?	

- *Influence? How has Black exploration influenced other fields?*
- *Challenges? What makes it harder for exploration to advance?*

DISCUSSION: BIG IDEAS DEBRIEF

1. How is Black exploration a critical part of Black history?
2. Refer to the list of explorers you made before viewing. Why might Americans have learned about Ponce de León or John Glenn but not pioneering Black explorers like Juan Garrido or Katherine Johnson?
3. How does American society benefit from the contributions of its Black explorers and pioneers of land, sea and space?

DO NEXT

WHAT Students extend and share their learning with others.

WHEN Use after viewing and discussing.

HOW Ask students to try one or both of these activities.

1. Write a news article. Give students an opportunity to showcase their learning about Black exploration and Black explorers. Have them write an original news story explaining how African Americans broke boundaries exploring land, sea and space. Ask them to share their piece on social media or send it to an editor at your school's website or newsletter.
2. Uncover the unknown. Give students an opportunity to highlight new learning from the videos. Plan and carry out an investigation using the *Student-led Inquiry & Research* graphic organizer, supporting student research about another African American explorer or pioneer.

RELATED RESOURCES

Before/Now graphic organizer

Student-led Inquiry & Research graphic organizer

FOCAL POINT

The first African to set foot on what would become U.S. soil was a free Black man named Juan Garrido.

FROM JUAN GARRIDO



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

JUAN GARRIDO

(publication forthcoming; check website for updates)

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who was Juan Garrido? *Answer:* He was a free Black man and conquistador (Spanish conqueror), as well as the first African to set foot on land that is now the United States.

INFERENCES What is significant about Garrido's expedition with Ponce de León to Florida? *Answer:* As the first recorded Black person in what is now the U.S., he demonstrates that people of African descent occupied space in the New World without being enslaved.

BLACK EXPLORERS

KEY DETAILS Which Black man saw more of the North American continent on foot than any other explorer before Lewis and Clark? *Answer:* Esteban, an enslaved African brought to Florida.

INFERENCES Why might students have learned about Lewis and Clark but not Esteban? *Answer:* Textbooks and lessons often omit the contributions of Black people.

KATHERINE JOHNSON

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who was Katherine Johnson and why did she receive Presidential Medal of Freedom? *Answer:* Katherine Johnson was a mathematical genius who worked at NASA and broke racial and gender barriers.

INFERENCES What milestones did Katherine Johnson accomplish? *Answer:* She went to high school at 10 years old, college at 15, and was one of three Black students—and the only woman—to integrate West Virginia University's graduate school.

Answer Keys

EARLY EXPLORERS

JUAN GARRIDO (1480 – 1550) was a free African man who traveled to the Americas as part of the Spanish conquest of the West Indies and Mexico. He later became a farmer and is credited with bringing the practice of wheat cultivation to the Americas.

Source: [Luis Escamilla, BlackPast](#)

PONCE DE LEÓN (1471 – 1521) was a Spanish colonizer who claimed the territory of Florida for the Spanish crown. Source: [history.com](#)

ESTEBAN (1500 – 1539) was an enslaved man of African descent and the first non-Native person who spent ten years exploring—on foot—the territory that is today known as Arizona and New Mexico.

Source: [National Park Service](#)

MATTHEW HENSON (1866 – 1955) was an African American explorer who accompanied Robert E. Peary on eight of his Arctic expeditions. He was among the first group of Western explorers ever to reach the North Pole and, in 1912, he published *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* detailing his experience. Source [Britannica](#)

SPACE PIONEERS

GUION BLUFORD (1942 –) is an aerospace engineer and astronaut who, in 1983, became the first African American to be launched into space. Over the next ten years he continued to work for NASA and participated in several additional space missions. Source: [John M. Logsdon, Britannica](#)

RONALD MCNAIR (1950 – 1986) was an astronaut who became the second African American to go to space as Mission Specialist aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1984. He died in the 1986 Challenger explosion.

Source: [McNair Scholars Program, UC Berkeley](#)

MAE JEMISON (1956 –) is a medical doctor, engineer, NASA astronaut and the first African American woman in space. On September 12, 1992, Jemison and six other astronauts went into space on the space shuttle Endeavor. Source: [Kerri Lee Alexander, National Women's History Museum](#)



IN 1983, GUION BLUFORD BECAME THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO GO INTO SPACE.
FROM *BLACK EXPLORERS*

KATHERINE JOHNSON (1918 – 2020) was a NASA mathematician who helped send the first Americans into space. As a Black woman working for NASA in the 1950s and '60s, Johnson overcame social boundaries and racial discrimination. President Barack Obama awarded her the Medal of Freedom in 2015. In 2016, her impressive career became the subject of a book and movie called *Hidden Figures*. Source: [Joanna Stauss, Space.com](#)

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is an independent agency of the United States Federal Government responsible for the civilian space program as well as aeronautics and space research. Source: [NASA](#)

THE BLACK CHURCH & FISK JUBILEE SINGERS



TARGET GRADE LEVELS 6-8, 9-12

In this lesson, students will learn how African Americans transformed Christianity and created a new cultural site that would play a critical role in their freedom struggle: the Black Church. For centuries, the Black Church has inspired Black Americans to envision a new life and provided space where its members and their allies could organize to defeat racism and promote economic equality. Students will also learn about the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the lyrical voice of Reconstruction, who popularized the sacred tradition of spirituals passed on by their ancestors.

KEY FIGURES

- Richard Allen
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Fisk Jubilee Singers

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

- African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church
- Fisk University

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Black Church a critical part of the Black community and the Black freedom struggle?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of Black entertainers like Fisk Jubilee Singers?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The Black Church serves as a place for African Americans to rebuild their spirits after suffering racist assaults and segregation.
2. Groups such as churches or gospel choirs foster community solidarity in the struggle for Black freedom.

Procedure

VIEW

**THE BLACK CHURCH
HOW THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS SAVED
THEIR UNIVERSITY**

CLOSE READING: CONNECTIONS TO SELF

WHAT Students connect new learning to themselves and their identities.

WHEN Use during viewing to track personal connections.

HOW Have students watch the videos and take notes using the *View and Share* graphic organizer to track connections between themselves, their experiences and their new learning. Ask students:

1. What was your favorite part? Why?
2. What information was new to you?
3. What learning will you share with others? How will you share it?

DISCUSSION: BIG IDEAS DEBRIEF

WHAT Students engage in conversation about new learning.

WHEN Use after viewing and completing the Close Reading activity.

HOW Ask students to answer the following questions with a partner or small group.

1. Why is the Black Church a critical part of the Black community and the Black freedom struggle?
2. How does society benefit from the contributions of Black entertainers like the Fisk Jubilee Singers?

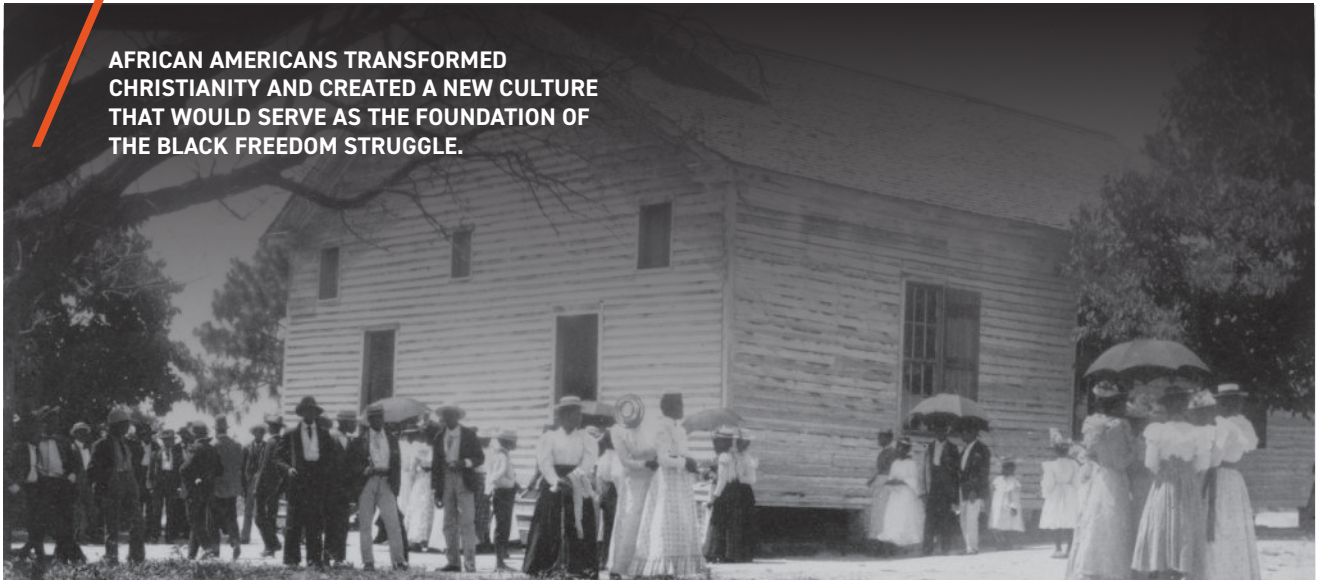
DO NEXT

WHAT Students extend and share their learning with others.

WHEN Use after viewing and discussing.

HOW Ask students to try one or more of the following activities.

AFRICAN AMERICANS TRANSFORMED CHRISTIANITY AND CREATED A NEW CULTURE THAT WOULD SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE.



1. Explore your community. Ask students to locate the Black churches in their community. Research and discover their history. Are there Black entertainment groups, like the Fisk Jubilee Singers, in your area? Share what you find with others.

2. Create an original piece of art. Give your students an opportunity to showcase what they learned about the Black Church and the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Have them produce an original piece of art (visual art, music, drama, poetry, dance, etc.) to convey what they learned. Plan a showcase of their original work.

EXTEND YOUR LEARNING: DISCOVER BLACK SCHOLARS

Each video features a Black scholar or academic who shares historical context with the audience. It's important to read and learn from Black experts in their respective fields. Take time to research the works of the scholars featured in this group of videos. Consider tracking what you learn using the *Student-led Inquiry & Research* graphic organizer.

WHAT Students discover modern Black scholars by exploring their work.

WHEN After watching videos.

- Brittney Cooper – Rutgers University
- Peniel Joseph – University of Texas
- Farah Griffin – Columbia University
- Victoria Sanders – Fisk University student
- Dwayne Mitchell – Fisk University student

RELATED RESOURCES

View and Share graphic organizer
General Notetaking graphic organizer

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

THE BLACK CHURCH

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING What predicated the founding of the Black Church? *Answer:* Enslavers previously used Christianity to pacify enslaved people; African Americans transformed Christianity, creating a new culture that supported community and resistance.

KEY DETAILS How was the Black Church part of the freedom struggle? *Answer:* It took an abolitionist stance; Black religious leaders led the community in military services, by holding public office and by organizing social movements.

INFERENCES What tactics of the Black Church were used in the Civil Rights Movement by leaders like Dr. King? *Answer:* Combining religion with nonviolent resistance; organizing via congregations; utilizing prophetic tradition, oration and spirituals/music.

HOW THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS SAVED THEIR UNIVERSITY

MAIN IDEA/GENERAL UNDERSTANDING Who were the Fisk Jubilee Singers? *Answer:* A singing group that became the lyrical voice of Reconstruction and brought African American spirituals to the larger world.

INFERENCES Why were the Fisk Jubilee Singers important for the entertainment industry at the time? *Answer:* Historically, most audiences only saw Black people portrayed in minstrel shows. The Fisk Jubilee Singers were audiences' first introduction to Black religious traditions and music.

Answer Keys

KEY FIGURES

RICHARD ALLEN (1760 – 1831) was an educator, writer and minister who was born into slavery but purchased his freedom as a young man. When his church instituted segregated seating, he and other parishioners walked out and formed a separate church that would become Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. After numerous conflicts with the white Methodist denomination, in 1816 Allen formed his own: the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the first independent Black denomination in the United States. [Source: Priscilla Pope-Levison, BlackPast](#)

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929 – 1968) was an African American minister and non-violent activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the modern Civil Rights Movement. He was murdered by James Earl Ray, a white racist, in 1968. [Source: The King Center](#)

FISK JUBILEE SINGERS were a singing group that toured to earn money for their school, Fisk University. The group gained a reputation among both white and Black audiences for the quality of their singing voices and for their musical selections—spirituals—which were rarely heard outside of Black homes and churches. The popularity of the Fisk Jubilee Singers contributed to the recognition of spirituals as a legitimate genre of music. [Source: Britannica](#)

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (AME) CHURCH was established after African American ministers Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and others recognized that that racism within the Methodist Church was preventing them from worshipping freely. Allen founded the Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia in

1794 and went on to found the AME denomination in 1816 to establish Bethel's independence from interfering white Methodists. [Source: African Methodist Episcopal Church](#)

FISK UNIVERSITY is a private Historically Black University in Tennessee. It was established in 1865 to educate formerly enslaved people, and its 40-acre campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. [Source: Fisk University](#)



FOCAL POINT

The Fisk Jubilee Singers performed spirituals for white audiences, sharing the dignity, purpose and beauty of Black culture.

FROM *HOW THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS SAVED THEIR UNIVERSITY*