

Black History Month twenty-eight ideas

Celebrate Black History Month with these twenty-eight ideas, one for each day of February, that recognize the heritage, accomplishments, and culture of African Americans in the United States.

1. Share with students [“I, Too, Sing America” by poet Langston Hughes](#) and have a discussion about the poem’s vocabulary, rhythm, and meaning.
2. Bake [sweet potato biscuits](#), a traditional soul food treat, with this delicious [recipe](#).
3. [Listen to the blues](#) and then invite students to [compose their own 12-bar blues music](#).
4. Conduct a read-aloud of [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech](#), then invite students to write their own speeches about what they are inspired to change in the world.
5. Play the [African counting game Mancala](#). To make the game board, use a large egg carton (cut off the lid) and tape an extra cup (cut from another carton) to each end.
6. View an interactive timeline chronicling [“The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow”](#) and other historical events, such as the ratification of the 14th Amendment.
7. See James Karales’s [photographs](#) of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery civil rights marches.
8. [Examine these oral histories](#) from elderly African Americans in Elbert County, Georgia, and Abbeville County., South Carolina on the National Park Service website.
9. For older students, share excerpts from [Push, a novel by Sapphire](#), and clips from the film *Precious*. Host a discussion about the culture Precious grows up in, and how she overcomes adversity with education.
10. Share excerpts of contemporary novelist [Zadie Smith’s On Beauty](#) with students and, [using the reading guide](#), have a discussion about her portrayal of white and black middle-class kids in America.
11. Teach about the importance of journalism as well as its limitations by [exploring a variety of clippings](#) from the freedom rides of 1961 to the reporting on Malcolm X’s assassination.
12. [Watch student-made digital stories on important African Americans](#). Divide students into groups to make their own digital stories about a person of their choice.
13. Teach students [the songs of the civil rights movement](#), such as “This Little Light of Mine” and “Oh, Freedom.” Discuss how the lyrics reflect the defiant and hopeful spirit of the time.

14. Trace the history of the blues from its beginnings in the fields of the South to its global impact on today's music. Visit the [Kennedy Center](#) to learn about B. B. King and other musicians.
15. Teach students about director, producer, writer, and actor [Spike Lee](#), a successful and prolific African American filmmaker.
16. Take students through [artists' interpretations of freedom and equality](#) with works by Norman Rockwell, Martin Puryear, and many others, in this gallery from the National Endowment for the Humanities. (Enter the gallery, chose "Themes" on the upper right, and then choose "Freedom and Equality.")
17. View artist [Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series](#), which depicts the migration of slaves from the South to the North in search of a better life.
18. Read "[A Pledge to Rescue Our Youth](#)" by poet [Maya Angelou](#). Then, [watch a video](#) about her inspiration for this profound piece on youth and education.
19. Learn about [the history of hip-hop music](#), a genre that emerged in the Bronx, New York City, in 1970. Ask students to bring in examples of their favorite songs or dances to discuss.
20. Teach students about [Nelson Mandela](#), his imprisonment, and [the battle to end apartheid in South Africa](#).
21. Show students Paul Robeson's home, the Lincoln Memorial, and other historic places of the civil rights movement with this [interactive road trip](#).
22. In Africa, sesame seeds bring good luck. Make a delicious batch of [sesame cookies with this recipe](#).
23. Explore CNN's [Black in America 2](#), which continues CNN's investigation of the most challenging issues facing African-Americans. Soledad O'Brien reports on people who are using ground-breaking solutions to transform the black experience.
24. Watch Christopher Paul Curtis, a winner of the Newbery Medal, [give advice to young authors](#).
25. Learn about the scientific work of African Americans with these [Black History Month resources](#) from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
26. Read excerpts from President Barack Obama's *The Audacity of Hope* (or his [Audacity of Hope speech](#)) and discuss the importance of the election of our country's first black president.
27. Who was the first African American tennis player to win the U.S. Open? Who was the first African American woman elected to U.S. Congress? Find out about many [famous firsts in black history](#) on Biography.

28. Tour an [online exhibit](#) that marked the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision that changed education and helped end segregation in schools.