

# Black Stories Matter

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Discover the stories of groundbreakers in Black history, from astronauts and athletes to poets and presidents. Each book features ten main biographies of significant Black men and women. Smaller biographies introduce six more people and their contributions. Both written and illustrated by people of Black heritage, each title is fully illustrated with vibrant and engaging artwork throughout.

The innovative and multimodal lesson plans in the Black Stories Matter Teacher's Guide are tailored for grades 6 and have a social studies, language and arts focus. Students will learn to think critically about the historical events they learn about by considering the various perspectives and how those perspectives play into historical representations. Overall students will learn the importance of considering a variety of perspectives when creating their own understanding of any event.

Although each lesson plan in this guide can stand alone, the lessons follow a sequential order that works to scaffold understanding, and can be taught as such. Reproducible worksheets and assessment tools accompany each lesson plan. The titles in Black Stories Matter include:

***Amazing Artists***

***Brave Leaders and Activists***

***Groundbreaking Scientists***

***Sports Heroes***

# PACING CHART AND VOCABULARY

| Lesson Plan Title | Pacing                | Vocabulary   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Voices in History | 1 to 2 class periods* | factual<br>perspective<br>stakeholders<br>viewpoints |
| History in Art    | 2 class periods       | depiction<br>medium<br>portrayal<br>representation   |
| Living Library    | 3 to 4 class periods  | interview<br>perspective<br>representation<br>script |

\* 1 class period = 40 to 60 minutes

# ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

Accommodations provide equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is learned. Accommodations allow a student access to the subject or course without any changes to the knowledge and skills the student is expected to demonstrate.

Educators are encouraged to adapt the instructional approach, activities, and assessments included in this guide to best meet the diverse interests, needs, and abilities of their students. Possible accommodations may include:

## Instructional Strategies

- Break tasks into parts with accompanying time lines
- Provide extra time for processing of oral information.
- Pair oral instructions with visual ones (writing or symbols)
- Pre-teach new vocabulary and regularly review previously taught vocabulary
- Provided model of completed work
- Frequently check with the student to get him/her started
- Provide oral and visual instructions and examples
- Provide a checklist of tasks for the student

## Environmental Strategies

- Proximity to teacher
- Strategic seating
- Flexible or mixed-ability grouping
- Provide an alternative setting for learning that is free from visual and auditory distractions.

## Assessment Strategies

- Build in extra time to allow student to process questions asked and answers given
- Provide written instructions and rubrics for assignments
- Offer a choice of assessment activities so that the student can choose one suited to their strengths
- Space out or extend assignments to prevent student feeling overwhelmed
- Reduce the number of tasks used to assess skill or concept
- Allow students to use assistive devices or technology

# LESSON 1

## Voices in History

### Curriculum Correlations

#### Common Core State Standards

RI.6.3

#### C3 Framework for Social Studies

D2.Civ.2.6-8

#### Ontario Language Arts Standards

Grade 6 Reading:

1.6

#### Ontario Social Studies Standards

Grade 6

A2.5

### Materials

- Black Stories Matter books
- Scrap paper
- Access to research materials (computers, books, etc.)
- *Voices in History Research Template*
- *Voices in History Rubric*

### Setting the Stage

Before the lesson, choose an event to discuss as a class. This should be something all of the students know about. It can be something that has taken place at school (winter concert, sporting event, play, class party etc.), a local event (sports game, parade, festival/ fair, news event etc.), or a historical event that has taken place in your students' lifetimes (an election, pandemic, natural disaster etc.). It can, but does not need to be, an event they personally witnessed. Ensure the event is relevant to your students and current enough that they will be able to discuss it.

Once you have your chosen event, begin the lesson by mentioning the event. You may choose to show relevant pictures to spark their memory. Encourage students to silently reflect on that event. On scrap paper, have them jot down what comes to mind when they are reminded of that event. Encourage students to write down both facts about the event and their opinions/feelings about the event.

Once students have written a few notes, place students into small groups to share their notes on the event. When students are done discussing, keep them in their groups and ask them to reflect as a group on the following:

- How their individual notes were different or similar.
- How they were influenced by what others shared about the event.
- Whether they have any facts about the event that they could not agree on as a group.

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explore issues from the perspective of an individual related to a specific event.
- Compare how individual perspectives can alter the presentation of an event.

## Activity

Place students in small groups, providing them each with a Black Stories Matter book. If you have additional books that focus on historical figures feel free to include these as well to diversify the representation in the activity.

Allow each group to flip through the books, asking themselves which individuals they are familiar with and which they have never heard of before. They might find that in some books there are more individuals they have heard of than in others.

Discuss with the class how, just like with the warm up activity, there are many different individual perspectives related to an event. Two people may have seen the exact same thing happen, but their perspectives on the event may be very similar or different. When we focus on an event through one person's perspective, it changes the way in which we view the event.

Give each student a copy of *Voices in History Research Template*.

Have students think of a historical event they wish to research. If you are focused on a specific unit of study, you can tailor the events or allow students to choose from a list. If there is no specific focus, allow students to pick an event and figure from the Black Stories Matter books or other areas of interest.

Each student needs to choose a historical event to research from the perspective of a specific "voice". If students are interested in a particular figure, just ensure there is a historical event they can use to frame their research. Otherwise, the second task will not work and vice versa. Some students may need to do research just to select their historical event or figure.

During their initial research, students should focus on only the event as it pertains to their historical figure. If they have access to a primary source, they can gather more research about their historical figure's perspective. Otherwise, they can look for facts and information about their figure in relation to the event. Allow students a period to research.

Once students have completed the first section of their research, focusing on their historical figure's voice, let students know we will change directions and look at a more overall representation of their historical event.

When researching, students should not include their historical figure in their research search terms. Students are looking for an overall understanding of the event.

If available, allow access to textbooks, encyclopedias or non-fiction books on the specific events students are researching. Their notes should include only facts (dates, statistics etc.) no opinions.

## Extensions

- ▶ To extend their learning and understanding about the variety of voices represented in an event, encourage students to research a different perspective of a historical event other than the individual researched during the lesson. Compare how the two individual perspectives are similar and or different using a venn diagram. You could choose to do this as a class with a current or recent event. If possible, interview people about the event and compare their perspectives.

## Wrap-Up

As the students have completed their *Voices in History Research Template*, have them discuss their findings with a partner. Have students go through their overall understanding of their historical figure and event.

After talking with a partner, bring the class together as one large group. Have students share one thing from their research. This can be a fact they learned about the event or a reflection they came to after comparing their research.

Allow students time to think of the one thing they will share, then go around the room allowing each student to voice their finding.

If students are interested in a particular event or person, encourage them to seek out the classmate who researched it to learn more about that topic.

## Assessment

Assess students' understanding during the lesson using observational and anecdotal notes. Collect students' *Voices in History Research Template* and assess them using the *Voices in History Rubric* to ensure students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Voices in History Research Template

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Historical event</b>                 |  |
| <b>Historical figure</b>                |  |
| <b>Perspective of historical figure</b> | <i>Use point form notes to detail the event from the perspective of your historical figure on the event you chose.</i> |

#### **Secondary Research:**

Use additional sources to research your historical event overall—not only from your historical figure’s perspective. Use sources like encyclopedias, text books, and Internet sources that cover the entire event.

*Use point form notes to collect information and research about the historical event in this space.  
Information recorded here should be factual.*

## Voices in History Research Template

1. How did the information found in each research activity differ?

2. How was the historical figure represented in your secondary research?

3. How was your own understanding of the event changed by researching it in two different ways?

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Voices in History Rubric

|  |                 |                          |                             |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The student was able to effectively create accurate research notes for both the historical figure and historical event.            | <b>Achieved</b> | <b>Somewhat Achieved</b> | <b>Has Not Yet Achieved</b> |
| The student was reflective on how the focus of their research altered their research results and their understanding of the event. | <b>Achieved</b> | <b>Somewhat Achieved</b> | <b>Has Not Yet Achieved</b> |

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Voices in History Rubric

|  |                 |                          |                             |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The student was able to effectively create accurate research notes for both the historical figure and historical event.            | <b>Achieved</b> | <b>Somewhat Achieved</b> | <b>Has Not Yet Achieved</b> |
| The student was reflective on how the focus of their research altered their research results and their understanding of the event. | <b>Achieved</b> | <b>Somewhat Achieved</b> | <b>Has Not Yet Achieved</b> |

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# LESSON 2

## History in Art

### Curriculum Correlations

#### C3 Framework for Social Studies

D2.Civ.6.6-8

#### National Core Arts Standards

VA:Re.7.2.6a

MU: Pr4.2.6c

#### Ontario Social Studies Standards

Grade 6

A2.5

#### Ontario Arts Standards

Grade 6 Visual Arts

D3.1

Grade 6 Music

C3.1

### Materials

- Black Stories Matter series
- Scrap paper
- Speakers or projector
- Access to research materials (Internet, library books, etc.)
- Chart paper or poster paper
- Headphones (if using music)
- Copy of lyrics to “Good Job” by Alicia Keys
- Completed *Voices in History Research Template* from prior lesson (optional)
- *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet*
- *Analyzing Artistic Representations Checkbrick*

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand how historical events are represented in art.
- Explore how art can contribute to the understanding of a historical event or person.

### Setting the Stage

If you completed the prior lesson, use the same event that was used in the setting the stage section of lesson 1.

The event should be something all of the students know about. It can be something that has taken place at school (winter concert, sporting event, play, class party etc.), a local event (sports game, parade, festival/ fair, news event etc.), or a historical event that has taken place in your students’ lifetimes (an election, pandemic, natural disaster etc.). It can, but does not need to be, an event they personally witnessed.

Give each student a piece of blank scrap paper, tell them you will give them 10 minutes to create something with the paper to represent that event in any way they want. Encourage students to think beyond just drawing a picture. Allow students free reign over any artist materials in the classroom. Let students know if they don’t want to use the paper they do not have to.

Once the time is up, have students share what they created or started to create. Have students explain how their piece of art represents the chosen event. Some pieces will require full explanations others may be more clear. Remembering to remind students that each piece of art is that person’s representation and therefore can be no right or wrong.

After everyone has explored all of the art pieces. Discuss with the class how your perspective and representation of the event are all unique, but also how others perceive and experience your art is also unique.

### Activity #1

If the class completed the previous lesson, have students use their *Voices in History Research Template* and continue to investigate their historical event and/or historical figure.

Inform the class that today they will investigate how historical events can be represented in artistic mediums, and how these representations can tell us about the historical event and the perspective of its creator(s).

As a class brainstorm some words or phrases that come to mind when they think of the COVID-19 Pandemic. As students share ideas write them on the board for reference.

Give students a copy of the lyrics to “Good Job” by Alicia Keys, or project them for students to see. Then play the song for students to follow along with. When the song has finished, have students work in small groups or pairs to analyze the lyrics and see what information they can pull out from the song to tell them about the pandemic. Have student discuss the following questions:

- What perspective is Alicia Keys taking in this song?
- Who is being represented in the song?
- If you weren’t alive during the pandemic and you heard this song, what would you think of this time in history?
- How is this representation of COVID-19 different from your own experiences or those you’ve heard of?

Once students have talked with their groups discuss these questions as a class. Emphasize that just as with any other historical event, there are a variety of facets to consider and many more perspectives. This song is focusing solely on the front line workers that continued to work during the pandemic.

## Activity #2

If the prior lesson was completed, have students use the event they have already been researching. Otherwise, have students choose a historical event they are familiar with to research.

Allow students time to search for songs or visual representations of this historical event.

Once students have chosen a representation of their event, have students analyze their representation and make jot notes on their *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet*—only in the “before” section. Inform students that they will have time to add to this later.

Have students display their representation in some way (printed out, in a book, on a computer, lyrics to read etc.).

Next to each artifact, display the three questions that are on the *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet* on large chart paper. Give each student a colored pencil. Allow students 20 minutes to view the different representations around the room. At each station they should jot down, onto the chart paper, ideas to the three questions regarding each representation that they view.

Once you are finished viewing the different artistic representations, have students return to their representation and review the notes left by other students.

Encourage students to utilize some of these ideas on their *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet* in the “after” section. Once completed have students submit their *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet*.

## Extensions

- ▶ Have students research the impact this piece of art had on the time period in which it was created.
- ▶ Create art critiques of the piece of art they studied either as a viewer in that time period, or in current day.
- ▶ Allow students to create their own piece of art in whatever medium they choose to reflect a particular event in history or time period. Choosing the perspective they wish to try to represent.

## Wrap-Up

After students have handed in their *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet*, reflect on the representations they experienced. Have each student share something that surprised them or something they learned from the activity.

## Assessment

Assess students’ understanding during lessons using observational and anecdotal notes. Collect student’s individual *Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet* and assess using the *Analyzing Artistic Representations Checkbrick*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Analyzing Artistic Representations Worksheet

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Artistic representation: \_\_\_\_\_

Creator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. What information can you gather about the event from your representation?

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| Before | After |
|--------|-------|

### 2. What perspective is being represented?

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| Before | After |
|--------|-------|

### 3. How is this representation of your event similar or different to your understanding of the event?

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| Before | After |
|--------|-------|

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Analyzing Artistic Representations Checkbrick

| Criteria   | Yes | Somewhat | Not completed |
|--|-----|----------|---------------|
| Student chose a representation related to their event.                   |     |          |               |
| Student considers the perspectives demonstrated in their representation. |     |          |               |

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Analyzing Artistic Representations Checkbrick

| Criteria   | Yes | Somewhat | Not completed |
|--|-----|----------|---------------|
| Student chose a representation related to their event.                   |     |          |               |
| Student considers the perspectives demonstrated in their representation. |     |          |               |

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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# LESSON 3

## Living Library

### Curriculum Correlations

#### C3 Framework for Social Studies

D2.His.4.6-8

#### Common Core State Standards

SL.6.1

#### Ontario Social Studies Standards

Grade 6

B2.2

#### Ontario Language Arts Standards

Grade 6 Reading

Overall expectation 2

2.6

### Materials

- *Living Library Planner*
- *Living Library Rubric*

### Setting the Stage

Start the lesson by asking students to list things we use libraries for. Introduce the students to the idea of a Living Library. First, have them discuss with a partner what they think that might mean.

Once students have shared their ideas, inform the students that a living library is when you “borrow” a person to talk with and learn from. Much like when they take a book out and interact with it, they can interact with a person—and have the person interact back with them.

Have students role play that they are all strangers, and pair them up (try to pair up students who are not close friends). Encourage them to interview one another to try and learn more about who they are as a person. Avoid discussing things you already know about the person. Have students try it for a few minutes.

If students are met with awkward silences, provide prompts to give the students some jumping-off points. Suggested Prompts:

- When is a time in your life when you surprised yourself?
- When is a moment when you were the happiest? Saddest? Nervous? Etc.
- If you could travel back to a specific moment in time where would you go?
- What is the nicest thing anyone has ever said or done for you?
- Who is someone you admire?
- How does your family or culture shape who you are?
- What is something you regret? If you could go back and change it, would you?

When the conversations begin to die down, talk with the class about their experience. Ask students to avoid to share the specific details of the person they spoke with. Discuss how the students’ conversations went versus how they thought it was going to go. Did students learn something new about the person they spoke with?

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Create a depiction of a person who experienced a chosen historical event.
- Use a variety of sources to understand and present the perspective of an individual during a specific historical event.

## Activity

If following the lesson sequence, students will use their research from both prior lessons and focus on the same historical event. If only completing this lesson, have research materials and specific historical events ready for students to choose from.

Have students gather the materials they need for their research based on the event they have chosen. Provide each student with a copy of the *Living Library Planner*. Students will first have to decide if they wish to do a historical representation of a real person or create a fictional character who lived through their historical event.

Encourage students to begin by putting jot notes into their organizer about their first instincts to answer the questions. Then, they should begin more formal research into the event/character and see if they can find research to back up their initial thoughts. Highlight to students the importance of using primary research and specific quotes and stories in their research in order to bring their character to life. Students should spend 1 to 2 periods just on gathering research before beginning to construct their character.

Students should create a list of questions for their audience to ask them. Prompt students to think beyond the generic questions listed on the organizer and create questions about specifics of their event and their character. Remind students they must be prepared to provide a detailed answer to each question they listed.

Encourage students to create a script or cue cards to record their answers to each of the proposed questions. They may wish to research various other facts to include into their representation. Students may not want to use specific answers each time but rather to make it more natural as they speak to each question.

Begin your living library by having half the students present and half the students travel around the library. After enough time, the students will switch so that each student presents and each student was able to view some of the presentations.

## Extensions

- ▶ After students have spent time in their class's living library, allow other classes or groups of students to visit the library and meet with the individuals represented.
- ▶ Have students create a table and hold the living library like a fair. The table can have visuals (i.e., poster boards, artifacts, props etc) that they or their audience can refer to.
- ▶ Have students create a multimedia presentation (interview, website, movie trailer etc.) of the person they have represented so that others can view their living library without being present.
- ▶ Students could create scripts and skits to represent the historical perspective of their character (real or fictional).

## Wrap-Up

Celebrate the students' successful living library after their presentations by encouraging the students to stay in their character and mingle with each other. You may wish to have snacks and refreshments to make it like a party.

## Assessment

Observe and record anecdotal notes throughout the process regarding, time management, organization, planning, and research skills. Once students have begun the Living Library presentations, allow the students to practice their discussion with other students a few times before assessing. Visit each student's character and engage in a discussion with them, sticking closely to their suggested questions.

Assess each student using the *Living Library Rubric*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Living Library Planner

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Fictional or historical representation? \_\_\_\_\_

| Resources | Research  |
|-----------|---|
|           | What was your life like before the event?         |
|           | How did the event impact you personally?          |
|           | What were your thoughts or opinions on the event? |

## Living Library Planner

| Resources | Research                                     |
|-----------|--|
|           | How was your life different after the event? |
|           | Additional facts or thoughts:                |

**Suggested questions for your audience:**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Living Library Rubric

Event and Character: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Achieved</b> | <b>Somewhat Achieved</b> | <b>Has Not Yet Achieved</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Student created or represented a character relevant to their event.                   |                 |                          |                             |
| Student included a variety of research and resources in their Living Library Planner. |                 |                          |                             |
| Student was comfortable and familiar with the content of their character.             |                 |                          |                             |
| Student presented their character clearly and respectfully during the living library. |                 |                          |                             |

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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