

Black History Month



Why Do We Have Black History Month?



The idea of Black History Month originally came from the American **historian**, Carter G. Woodson.

As a historian, he found many of the contributions that Black people had made to society over the years were not recognised or shared with the public.

In 1926, he decided to create a week-long celebration of the important achievements of Black people throughout history. This later became Black History Month.

In 1987, the first Black History Month took place in the UK.

historian – Someone who studies  or writes about history.

Carter G. Woodson



What is Black History Month?

Black History Month is a time set aside each year to celebrate the achievements of Black people in the past and today.



When is Black History Month?

Black History Month takes place in October in the United Kingdom and in February in the United States each year.

There are many ways that people celebrate Black History Month. Many schools celebrate it by learning about the important contributions Black people have made to culture and society.

There are also many national, local and online events organised to improve people's understanding of the important achievements made by Black people.



When is Black History Month?

The history of people with Black heritage is part of the history that is studied all year round.

Black History Month is an opportunity for everyone to learn about significant Black and Mixed Heritage people and their contributions to Britain and the world.



Rosa Parks (1913-2005)



Rosa Parks was a civil rights activist. She lived in the United States at the time of **segregation**. The laws in place at the time stopped Black people from having equal rights.

segregation – When laws are in place to separate groups of people from others (e.g. because of the race) and treat them differently.



and was then arrested by the police.

People in the local community were angered by how Parks was treated. Many Black people began to **boycott** the buses in the city of Montgomery, where Parks lived, to protest against the segregation laws. This boycott was one of the first steps to end segregation in the United States.



boycott – To refuse to take part in or buy something, in order to protest.



Alice Coachman (1923-2014)

Alice Coachman was an African American athlete, who specialised in the high jump. In London in 1948, she became the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal.

Coachman was later inducted into the National Track-and-Field Hall of Fame and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame. She also set up her own charity, the Alice Coachman Track and Field Foundation to support young athletes.

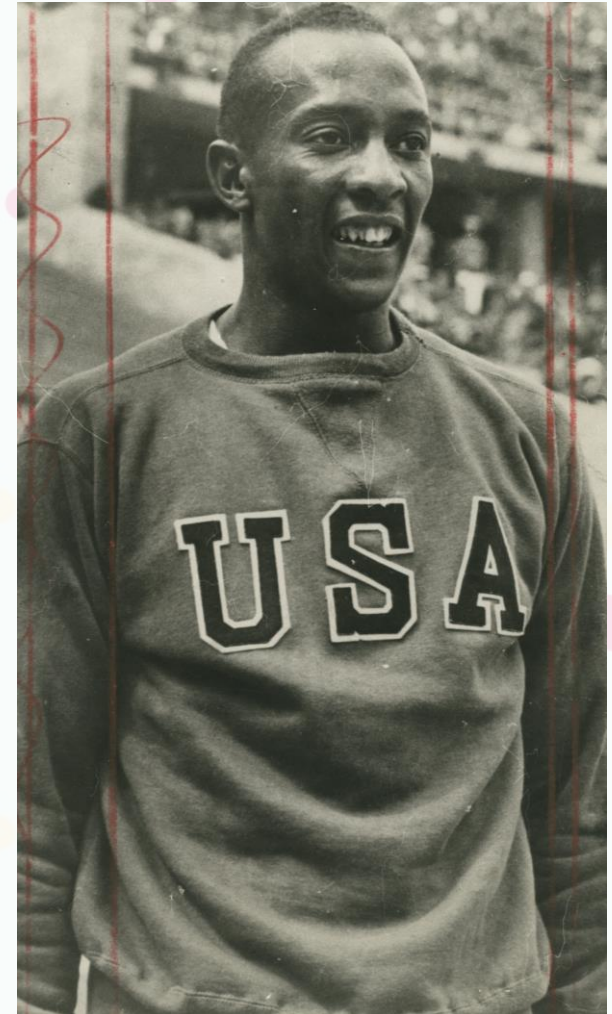


Jesse Owens (1913-1980)

Jesse Owens was an American track and field athlete. He took part in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games and won four gold medals; the 100 metres, the long jump, the 200 metres and the 4x100 metre relay.

During his life, he set many Olympic and world records. At one point, he was the world record holder for all sprint distances recognised by the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

In his later years, he worked for the Illinois State Athletic commission and in 1976, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



Professor Dame Elizabeth Anionwu (1947-)



Elizabeth Anionwu is a British nurse, professor and campaigner.

In 1979, she became the first **sickle cell disease** nurse specialist and started the first UK Sickle & Thalassaemia Screening and Counselling Centre.

After retirement, she spent years campaigning for a statue of the nurse, Mary Seacole, to be built. It was built in 2016 outside St Thomas' Hospital, London and became the first statue dedicated to a Mixed Heritage woman in Britain.

Sickle cell disease – A blood condition particularly common in people from African or Caribbean backgrounds.

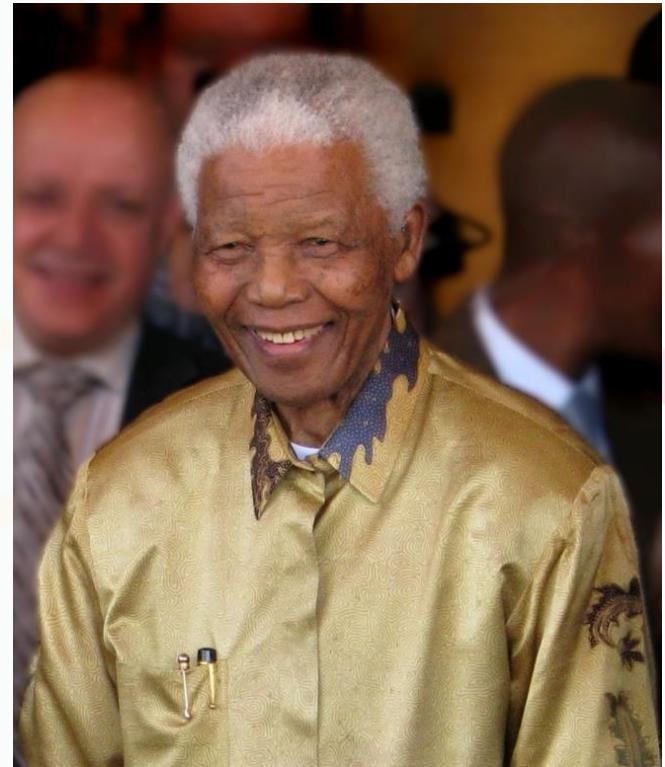


Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Nelson Mandela lived and grew up in a time in where the laws in South Africa discriminated against Black people and enabled the minority of White people to rule the country.

Mandela took a leading role in campaigning for equality. Some of the activities he was involved in broke the laws at that time and he was imprisoned for 27 years. After his release, he was elected as the first Black President of South Africa.

Many people around the world respected him for his courage, wisdom and for bringing people together.

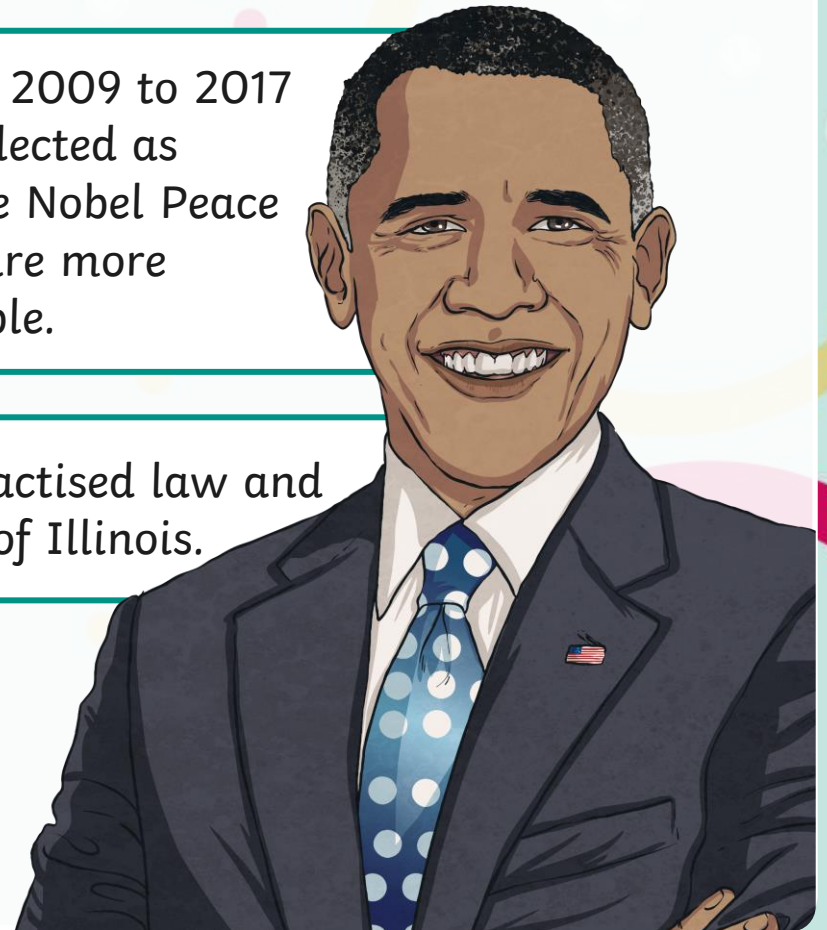


Barack Obama (1961-)

Barack Obama was the 44th President of the United States of America.

He served two terms in office between 2009 to 2017 and was the first Black person to be elected as president. While President, he won the Nobel Peace Prize and focused on making healthcare more widely available to the American people.

Before becoming President, he also practised law and served as a U.S. Senator for the state of Illinois.

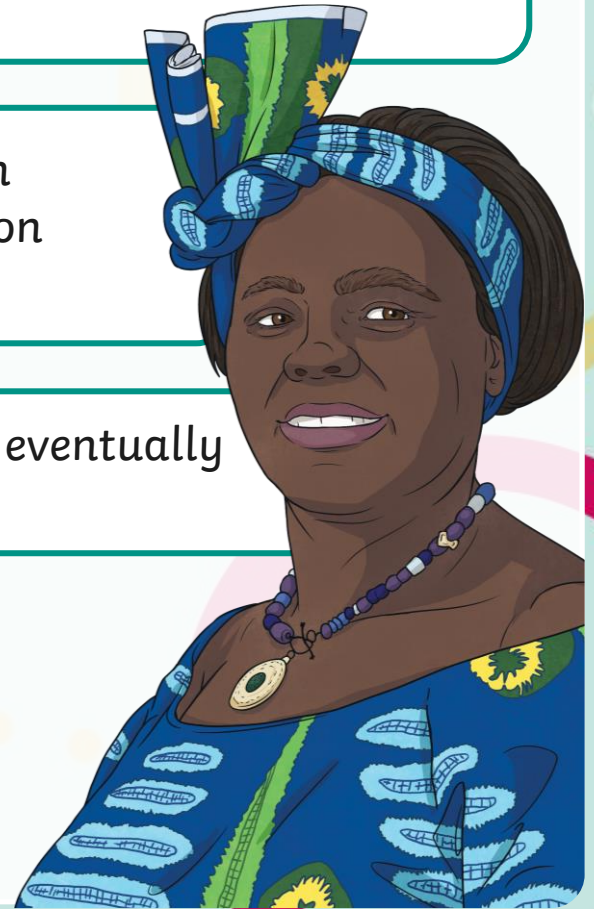


Wangari Maathai (1940-2011)

Wangari Maathai was a Kenyan politician and activist. Her work focused on the environment, democracy and human rights (particularly rights for women).

Maathai was best known for setting up the Green Belt Movement, which fought against deforestation in Kenya.

She won many awards for her activism and was eventually awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.



Benjamin Zephaniah (1958-)

Benjamin Zephaniah is a British poet and a human and animal rights activist.

As a boy, he wrote his own poetry as he did not find the poetry he was reading at school was relevant to him. His poetry is strongly influenced by the music and poetry of Jamaica.

He also writes poetry for children and has written plays for the stage, radio and television.



Maggie Aderin-Pocock (1968-)

Maggie Aderin-Pocock is a space scientist.

She has worked on the Gemini telescope, which has helped scientists understand more about distant stars. She was also the lead scientist on a project which used satellites to measure wind speeds, in order to help improve weather forecasts and our knowledge of climate change.

She was also the President of the British Science Association and in 2019 she won the Woman of the Year Innovation award.

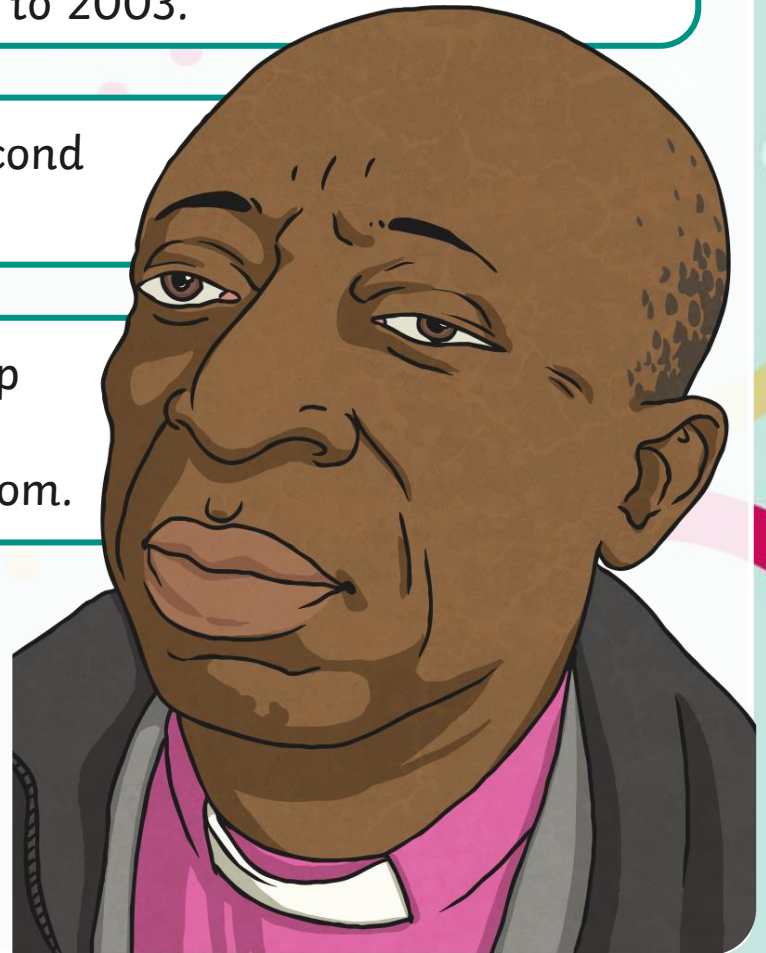


Bishop Wilfred Wood (1936-)

Wilfred Wood became the first Black bishop in the Church of England. He was the Bishop of Croydon from 1985 to 2003.

In 2004, the British people voted him second in the 100 'Great Black Britons' list.

Bishop Wilfred Wood worked hard to help with the relationships between people of different races living in the United Kingdom.



Talk About It

Why was Black History Month started?

How is it celebrated?

What else have you learnt about Black History Month?

Whose story has inspired you and why?



