



How to...



DID YOU KNOW?

Black History Month is in February to coincide with the birthdays of civil rights leader Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.

Celebrate Black history

February marks 100 years of honoring the contributions of Black Americans to the U.S.

Black History Month is having a big year in 2026, as the nation observes a century of commemorations. Find out how you can celebrate, starting with these steps.

Learn about Black History Month

The month honors the achievements, culture, and contributions of Black Americans. It began as a weeklong celebration in February 1926, launched by historian Carter G. Woodson (see box at right). The expansion from a week to a month happened in 1976 under President Gerald Ford. In 1986 Congress officially designated February as Black History Month.

Take a field trip

One way to observe the month is by visiting a museum that honors Black history, either in person or online. For example, the New York Public Library offers virtual exhibits from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, an area of New York City (tinyurl.com/TWJUS-Schomburg). At the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, you can explore art celebrating the daily lives of Black Americans (tinyurl.com/TWJUS-BlackHistory).



The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Get creative

You could design posters of Black pioneers, such as baseball legend Jackie Robinson or civil rights activists like Ruby Bridges, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King Jr. You can listen to music by pioneering Black American artists like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, and Charlie Parker. You can also read the works of poets like Amanda Gorman, Nikki Giovanni, and Langston Hughes.

Make a difference

Have open, honest conversations at home, all year, about equality. Likewise, your family can show appreciation for Black culture by regularly supporting Black-owned businesses. This could include eating at a restaurant or buying works by Black creators. You can also reflect on Black history by filling out the form at right.

WHO'S WHO ABOVE

A few of the Black Americans who have shaped our nation's history and culture include those pictured above, from left: Amanda Gorman, Jackie Robinson, Ruby Bridges, Harriet Tubman, President Barack Obama, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King Jr.

A visionary leader



Carter G. Woodson, a respected historian known as the "Father of Black History," was born in Virginia in 1875 to parents who had been enslaved. After working in coal mines, he entered high school at age 20. He completed his diploma in less than two years and became a teacher.

Woodson saw that Black history was ignored and suppressed in schools. To highlight that history, he started a journal in 1916 that is still published today as *The Journal of African American History*. In 1926, he founded Negro History Week, which later became Black History Month. Woodson died in 1950 at the age of 74.