

Michigan Celebrates

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

with Teaching Black History: Lessons from Educators

WEEK 2

February 2024

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

The Michigan Department of Education is excited to showcase lessons from educators to support instruction focused on Black history with a calendar during each week in February in celebration of Black History Month. Teaching diverse perspectives aligned to the work of [Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](#) to provide students with mirrors and windows to increase engagement in learning throughout the year is a student right and an educator responsibility. Additionally, instruction to honor specific groups of people during recognized heritage months brings emphasis to instructional areas that have not traditionally received adequate time nor attention.

This week's calendar includes five lessons suggested by Michigan educators for Michigan educators. Each educator also shares a personal why for teaching Black history.

February

12

Linda Doornbos

Oakland University

Ericka Murdock

Brendel Elementary School, Grand Blanc Community Schools

Grade Band:

3–5

Content Area(s):

Social Studies

Standard(s):

SS D2.Civ.4.3-5,
D2.Civ.12.3-5,
4 – H3.0.3,
4 – G1.0.3, 4 –
C5.0.3, 4 – P4.2.1

Why do you teach Black History?

Our history classrooms should challenge students to be justice-seeking democratic citizens; we need to create spaces where we study the past to understand the present and create a better future. Therefore, the continual teaching of Black history and other marginalized, silenced, or misrepresented histories is of utmost importance.

Joachim Prinz, a Jewish rabbi and survivor of the Holocaust, spoke at the 1963 March on Washington; his powerful words remind us that the most urgent problem of racial injustice is silence, for it is through silence that injustice is allowed to continue. Let us not remain silent. Let us take up the role of teaching history for justice.

Lesson Description/Summary: Introduce students to the Crosswhite family story through an interactive read-aloud of *January's Sparrow*. (Polacco, 2009). Invite students to investigate the actions of the Crosswhite family and community members of Marshall, Michigan to consider whether they were lawmakers or lawbreakers.

Resource: [Lawmakers or Lawbreakers? The Crosswhites and Community of Marshall, Michigan](#)

February

13

Kristi Henry

Beach Middle School, Chelsea School District

Grade Band:
6–8

Content Area(s):
Social Studies

Standard(s):
A range of social studies standards are addressed through these learning choices.

Why do you teach Black History?

There is no comprehensive American history without Black history.

Lesson Description/Summary: I present this Choice Board to my students on Feb. 1st. We talk about individuals and events related to Black history throughout the year, and this Choice Board allows them to choose topics more aligned with their interests and curiosities to further their learning.

Resource: [Celebrate Black History Month: Choice Board](#)

February

14

Jennifer Senkmajer

Yale Elementary, Yale Public Schools, 2023-2024 Region 5 Teacher of the Year

Grade Band: K–5

Content Area(s):
English Language Arts

Standard(s):
ELA RL.3-5.2,3, 6, 7, & 9 SL.3-5.1 & 2

Why do you teach Black History?

Part of being a well-rounded, connected individual is learning about how the past has shaped our current lives and how we fit into the world of people who are both like us and different from us. Black History Month is an important part of celebrating the contributions of Black and Brown people who've shaped our country.

Lesson Description/Summary: This lesson is a delightful read-aloud featuring Zuri, a young African American girl, who is preparing for a special day. She struggles to create the perfect look as she wrestles with styling her hair. Her father intervenes, and the two struggle together to style her hair in a beautiful way. Zuri's mother comes home following an absence and immediately notices her daughter's lovely hairdo. The lesson centers around some social emotional themes—the things that make us feel special, problem solving, teamwork, and family. Additionally, academic topics such as text structure, character development, and theme are explored.

Resource: [Hair Love Lesson](#)

February

15

Rané Garcia, Ph.D.

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Michigan Department of Education

Grade Band: 1–5

Content Area(s):
Social Studies, English Language Arts

Standard(s):
ELA RL.K-5.1, & 7 SS 1-H2.0.2, 3-G4.0.2, 4-G2.0.2, 4-G4.0.1

Why do you teach Black History?

Black history provides students with a greater understanding of the comprehensive history of our nation and world. By teaching Black history students learn more deeply about the beauty and richness of our diverse world, including the struggles and the triumphs.

Lesson Description/Summary: The book *This Is The Rope: A Story from the Great Migration* is used as a read-aloud to prompt discussion related to ELA and Social Studies appropriate for the grade level. History, geography, and migration are all topics that are accessible as students identify key ideas and details from the text and images.

Resource: [Big Moves Lesson](#)

February
16

Maria Manolias

Royal Oak High School, Royal Oak Schools

Grade Band:
9–12

Content Area(s):
Social Studies,
English Language
Arts

Standard(s):
ELA RL.9-12.3,
SL.9-12.1.c & d

Why do you teach Black History?

It's so important for my students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. When they don't, they lose motivation and their sense of belonging. Given that we are with our students for so much of the year, I find it important to devote time to celebrating each of my students' histories.

Lesson Description/Summary: The lesson explores how Black males are treated in America. Students will watch videos with information describing various experiences from their personal interactions and encounters. During the videos, students annotate and answer questions to lead our discussion.

Resource: [Black History Month Lesson](#)

Thank you to all of the Michigan educators who shared their why for teaching Black history and submitted their lessons. Look for the next set of lessons on **Thursday, February 15, 2024**. For diverse literature recommendations please visit MDE's [Equity in Literacy webpage](#).

