

## Lesson Plan on Famous Black Americans from the Past

**Introduction:** In this activity, students will learn about famous deceased Black Americans and the impact they had on America.

**Illinois Educational Standards Addressed:**

16.A.3a Describe how historians use models for organizing historical interpretation (e.g., biographies, political events, issues and conflicts).

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

16.A.3c Identify the differences between historical fact and interpretation.

16.A.4a Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.

16.A.4b Compare competing historical interpretations of an event.

16.A.5a Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

16.B.4b (W) Identify political ideas from the early modern historical era to the present which have had worldwide impact (e.g., nationalism/Sun Yat-Sen, non-violence/Ghandi, independence/Kenyatta).

16.B.5a (US) Describe how modern political positions are affected by differences in ideologies and viewpoints that have developed over time (e.g., political parties' positions on government intervention in the economy).

16.B.5b (US) Analyze how United States political history has been influenced by the nation's economic, social and environmental history.

16.D.4b (US) Describe unintended social consequences of political events in United States history (e.g., Civil War/emancipation, National Defense Highway Act/decline of inner cities, Vietnam War/anti-government activity).

16.D.5 (US) Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.

**Objectives:**

Learn the history of different famous Black Americans from the past.

Learn about the impact that different famous deceased Black Americans had on America.

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**In the classroom:**

Have students choose a famous Black American that is no longer living.

Some choices could be:

James Baldwin (1924-1987), author

Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), 18th century astronomer

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), artist

Daisy Bates (1914-1999), civil rights leader

Ruth Bolden (1910-2004), librarian and civil rights worker

George Washington Carver (1860-1943), plant scientist

Ray Charles (1930-2004), pop musician

Charles W. Chesnutt (1858-1932), author

Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005) politician, educator and author. first African-American United States congresswoman

Bessie Coleman (1892-1926) first African-American woman to become an airplane pilot and the first African-American licensed pilot in the world

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable (1745-1813), part Black, first resident of Chicago, Illinois

More can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_African\\_Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African_Americans)

**At the library:**

Have students research their person and answer these questions:

What was the person's name and when and where was he/she born and when and where did he/she die?

Where did this person live?

Did this person have a family, a spouse and children? How many children, if any?

Why is this person famous? Why are they considered an important part of United States history?

List at least five important facts about the person.

If you could ask the person three questions, what would they be? What do you think they would answer?

**Resources at the Pritzker Military Library:**

**(also available through interlibrary loan at your local library after your visit)**

Buckley, Gail Lumet. *American patriots: the story of Blacks in the military from the Revolution to Desert Storm*. New York: Random House, c2001.

Call Number: E185.63 .B93 2001

Garrow, David J. *Bearing the cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership conference*. Norwalk, CT: Easton, 1989.

Call Number: E185.97.K5 G36 1989.

Glover, Danny. *Frederick Douglass [videorecording]*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life,

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1995. Call Number: E468.7 1994.
- Goldman, Peter Louis. *The death and life of Malcolm X*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. Call Number: E185.97.L5 G64 1973
- McFeely, William S. *Frederick Douglass*. Norwalk, CT: Easton, 1990.  
Call Number: E449.D75 M374 1995.
- Schubert, Frank & Irene. *On the trail of the buffalo soldier II: new and revised biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, c2004. Call Number: U52 .O5 2004
- Tucker, Phillip Thomas. *Cathy Williams: from slave to female Buffalo Soldier*. Mechanicsburg, PA. :Stackpole Books, 2002.  
Call Number: E185.97.W694 T83 2002.
- Yates, Elizabeth. *Amos Fortune: free man*. New York: Dutton, 1970.  
Call Number: E185.97.F73 Y3 1963.