

# Black History Month: Research Project for pupils aged 11-14 years

A National Literacy Trust membership resource

## What is Black History Month?

Every October, people in the United Kingdom learn and celebrate Black history and heritage and the journey towards ongoing equality. Black history, can and should be recognised and celebrated all year round. This resource has been developed to honour and uplift famous Black authors and illustrators.

This year for Black History Month we're celebrating Black literary history and shining the spotlight on some of our favourite Black authors, illustrators and iconic characters from children's books.

This activity aims to engage and inspire pupils to explore inspirational Black authors and illustrators and their contribution towards the world of children's literature, through a research-based project.

## How to use this resource in the classroom

Below are eight Black authors or illustrators. Use the background information about each person (provided on the Author Spotlight download) to briefly introduce them to your class. Following this, invite pupils to work in small groups to complete a detailed research project about a chosen author/illustrator, which they will then present to the class.

**Petronella Breinburg**, an author, playwright and professor.  
**Serlina Boyd**, the author and founder of *Cocoa Magazines*.  
**Jasmine Richards**, the author and founder of *Storymix*.  
**Abiola Bello**, the founder of *Hashtag Press/HashtagBLAK*.

**Joseph Coelho**, a children's author and poet.  
**Benjamin Zephaniah**, a writer and dub poet.  
**Yomi Sodo**, the writer and founder of *BoxedIn*.  
**Errol Lloyd**, an artist, writer, editor and art critic.

## Curriculum Links (KS3 English – National Curriculum England)

### Writing

- ☑ Summarise and organise material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail
- ☑ Consider how their writing reflects the audiences and purposes for which it was intended

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**Did you know?**

In 2022 Joseph Coelho became the first ever Black male Children's Laureate!

As the Children's Laureate, Joseph is on a mission to join a library in every council in the country - why not join him and sign-up to your local library today?

Joseph believes strongly in making poetry accessible for everyone - especially children and young people!

## Research Project Brief

Pupils can use the research project outline sheet (found below) to note down their findings and follow steps one to four to complete their research:

1. Choose and explore one author/illustrator in detail. Research their background, their achievements and what inspired them to become an author.
2. Find five facts about them, which you could present as 'did you know...?'
3. Research one book they have written and explore the key themes presented within it.
4. Present the research in an engaging way to your peers. ***This could be a fact file, quiz, PowerPoint presentation, a blog/vlog, a piece of artwork or a "did you know?" style poster.***

## Plenary

Invite pupils to present their research to the class *and reflect on the following questions:*

- ✓ *What did pupils find most interesting about the authors/illustrators?*
- ✓ *What did they most enjoy researching and why?*
- ✓ *Who did they find the most inspirational and why?*
- ✓ *Would they recommend any of these authors to their friends/family and why?*
- ✓ *Why is it important to celebrate and champion the work of Black authors and illustrators?*

# Research Project

Name of author you are researching:

.....

Background Information:

Five facts researched:

1. ....  
.....
2. ....  
.....
3. ....  
.....
4. ....  
.....
5. ....  
.....

Name of three books published by them:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Chosen book to explore in more detail: .....

Core themes explored in the book	
Key characters	
Summary	

