

Black History Month: 'Did you know?'

Research Project for pupils aged 7-11 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.

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 provides the opportunity for your pupils to celebrate Black History Month, but can be delivered all year round.

Did you know?

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

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?

Resource overview

This resource supports pupils aged 7-11 (KS2) to embark on a group research project, to explore inspirational Black authors or illustrators and their contributions towards the world of children's literature. Pupils are invited to present their research, in a creative way, to the rest of the class. The work produced as part of this research project, could also form a classroom or school display.

Through taking part in this activity, pupils will have the opportunity to hone their skills of reading and retrieving information from non-fiction. Presenting their findings, will also provide the chance to focus on key speaking and listening skills. For more information on curriculum coverage, see links below.

Curriculum links

Spoken language (Y1-Y6 National Curriculum English Programme of Study)

- Ask relevant questions to extend understanding and knowledge
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes
- Participate in discussions and presentations
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)

Reading (KS2 National Curriculum English Programme of Study)

- Increase familiarity with a wide range of books, including fairy stories, myths and legends, and retelling some of these orally
- Retrieve and record information from non-fiction

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Who are the authors and illustrators we are celebrating?

- ✓ **Petronella Breinburg**, *an author, playwright and professor.*
- ✓ **Serlina Boyd**, *the author and founder of Cocoa Magazines.*
- ✓ **Jasmine Richards**, *the author and founder of Storymix.*
- ✓ **Errol Lloyd**, *an artist, writer, editor and art critic.*
- ✓ **Joseph Coelho**, *a children's author and poet, children's laureate 2022.*
- ✓ **Benjamin Zephaniah**, *a writer and dub poet.*
- ✓ **Abiola Bello**, *an author and founder of Hashtag Press and Hashtag BLAK.*

How to deliver the activity

- Divide your pupils into small groups and provide each group an author/illustrator to research from the given list above.
- Print out the research note sheet (see page 3) and provide each group with the information about their chosen author/illustrator which can be found in the *Author Spotlights* download.
- Pupils will need access to the web to conduct their research. We have provided two age-appropriate webpages per author/illustrator, for the pupils to explore.
- Support your pupils to consider how they would like to present their research to the rest of the class. It could be in the form of a presentation (using PowerPoint slides) or even a quiz for the class. They may also like to produce artwork, a fact-file, a poster, a blog or even a vlog.
- At the end of the project, discuss the following with pupils:
 - *What did they most enjoy researching and why?*
 - *Who did they find the most inspirational and why?*
 - *Had they heard of any of the authors/illustrators before? If not, why not?*
 - *Would they have recommended any of these authors/illustrators to their friends/family and why?*
 - *Why do they think reading from a range of diverse authors is important?*

Research Project Brief

1. Find five facts about your author or illustrator. You could present these as 'did you know?' e.g. Did you know *the first Black author in the UK to write picture books about Black children was Petronella Breinburg?*
2. Name three books written or illustrated by this person.
3. Choose one of the books and answer the five Ws to provide some information about it: **Who** is it about? **Where** is it set? **When** does it take place? **What** happens and **why?**
4. Decide how to present your research to the class, then prepare and rehearse!

Research Project Notes

Name of person you are researching:

.....

Five facts about them:

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

Name of three books published by them:

1.
2.
3.

Chosen book to research:

.....

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	Why?