

# Great Big Live Assembly



A national school assembly  
to celebrate

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH



## SCHOOLS RESOURCE PACK



**Mae Jemison**  
First African-American  
Woman in Space

**TUESDAY**  
**10th October**  
**09:05AM**

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# GREAT BIG LIVE *ASSEMBLY*

**Tuesday 10th of October at 9.05am**

Last term we made educational history with our first ever interactive Great Big Live Assembly, focusing on children's perspectives on the refugee experience. The event reached over 600 schools, representing 300,000 children, who gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about the ways it facilitated a positive learning experience for all. Building on that success our upcoming Great Big Live Assembly will be a celebration of Black History and its impact on our world today.

All of us would love our schools to be places where every child can flourish and grow but sadly racism is an ongoing challenge for society and we know that some of you see that brought into your schools. We recognise that you face the pressure of dealing with that challenge faced by many pupils and that you work hard to build communities where everyone can thrive - students and staff alike. Sadly, a study by the Guardian newspaper found that more than 60,000 racist incidents were recorded in UK schools over a five year period. Another study found that 95% of young black people in the UK have heard or witnessed racist language at school, with 51% of boys saying they heard it "all the time". Even in schools where racist language and incidents are rare, there can be misperceptions about the value, impact and challenges of diversity. We want to stand with you as you deal with this and work for a more equitable society.

When I was growing up racism was an everyday part of my school experience. It was not only in the taunts and bullying from other children, but the low expectations some teachers had of me, the lack of role-models who looked like me in literature, science, arts and sport, and the absence of black and asian figures of influence across the curriculum.

Although there have been great strides forward in all of these areas since my childhood, there is much more to be done. This year the theme of Black History Month is "Celebrating Sisters". Our Great Big Live Assembly will showcase some of the stories of amazing Black women who have made our world a better place. We are delighted that BBC's Gemma Hunt, well-known presenter of Swashbuckle and Songs of Praise, will be co-hosting our Great Big Live Assembly, alongside myself and Jeriah Kibusi, a BAFTA award-winning 12-year-old journalist.

**The 20-minute Great Big Live Assembly will help children to see:**

- why celebrating Black History matters**
- what difference Black women have made and still make to our world**
- how we can all play our part to make sure everybody feels welcome in our schools**



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## CELEBRATING OUR *SISTERS*

Black History Month (1 October - 31 October 2023) is the theme of our Great Big Live Assembly on October 10th 2023. This national celebration aims to promote and celebrate the contributions of those with African and Caribbean heritage to British society and to foster an understanding of Black history in general. This year, Black History Month will be dedicated to honouring the achievements of Black women and the crucial role they have played in shaping history, inspiring change, and building communities. The Great Big Live Assembly is delighted to help showcase some of those women to a future generation, and make those links showing how they relate to our lives and learning today.

**Black History Month offers schools an opportunity to consider and affirm:**

- how inclusion of all children helps them to thrive in a diverse environment
- how they can help children overcome feeling excluded or picked on because of their race
- how children from all backgrounds can feel welcome and supported in our schools
- how diverse role-models and figures of influence can inspire children in their learning and relationships
- how Black history and cultural diversity values can be embedded into their curriculum and school life

# TALKING ABOUT *BLACK HISTORY*

***Black History provides an excellent opportunity to show children how to talk about the complex and often contentious issues of race and racism safely and constructively. It gives us the chance to reduce misperceptions and discrimination, model respect for those from different backgrounds, and develop an appropriate emotional and moral response to those who are at risk of marginalisation. Here are some practical tips for tackling this subject with school children.***

## ***1. Discover what they already know***

Children are likely to have ideas about their own racial and cultural identity, and that of others. Discover points of connection as well as opportunities to appreciate differences. Let students share their experiences, perspectives and stories. Ask open-ended questions, e.g., who they most respect and why, what they love about other cultures, where they have been, and which news stories or books they have read.

## ***2. Listen to what they think***

Listening to children is vital. It permits and enables them to process information they have heard, it helps them make connections for themselves, and reassures them that they and their opinions, feelings and memories are valuable. It can also reveal something of their beliefs, prejudices or experiences that may shape their reactions to those who are from different backgrounds to them. Be curious - ask them often what they think and why.

## ***3. Identify how they feel***

Give children space and opportunity to express their opinions and worries. Ask them 'How do you feel about that?' or 'How do you think other people might feel about that?' Thank children for sharing their feelings, & praise them for identifying the feelings of others. Point out children's facial expressions and body language to help them recognise their own range of emotions when considering difficult topics such as racism.

## ***4. Encourage empathy***

When children put themselves in other people's shoes, consider their perspectives, circumstances or feelings, this builds the empathy and respect they need to develop strong and healthy relationships. Praise and encourage empathetic and respectful behaviour to help embed it. Model empathy and respect towards people from different cultures and backgrounds to promote the building of safe, diverse and rewarding communities.

## ***5. Warn about wrong attitudes***

Racism can highlight the worst of humanity. Take the opportunity to warn children of the consequences of racist attitudes. State that it is not right when people are treated unfairly because of the colour of their skin, or other perceived difference. Look out for social media posts, assumptions or playground jokes that are wrong or unkind and help children know what they can do when they see and hear racism.

## ***6. Make them feel safe***

It's important that all children feel safe. Reassure those who are at risk of marginalisation that you want them to feel safe. Talk about what can be done to help them feel safe. Listen to those who feel they are being excluded or misunderstood or discriminated against. Have a conversation about what it would take for them to feel safe. Create a safe environment in your classroom where everyone can talk freely and experience compassion, understanding and support.

## ***7. Explore and explain***

The better you understand the issues around race & racism, the better you'll be able to explain issues in ways that are appropriate. There are a number of resources that can inform you, your school and others that you can explore with the children in your class. Take time to look through these and share as appropriate.

## ***8. Inspire them to action***

Celebrate change-makers and those who make the world a better place. Learn about those people together to show the children they can make a positive difference too.

# SIGNPOSTS FOR *TEACHERS*

**We strongly recommend teachers look at some of the following resources in preparation for the Great Big Live Assembly.**

## **1. Black History Month**

This website has a wide range of resources and articles, to help school staff develop their own knowledge and understanding. You can also purchase a pack of informative and inspirational posters that ties in with their Celebrating Sisters theme.

## **2. The Black Curriculum**

A social enterprise committed to the teaching and support of Black history all year round. Their website offers a wide range of resources (including videos) for using in the classroom or to support planning. Suitable for using with KS2 and KS3 pupils.

## **3. Runnymede**

The Runnymede Trust is the UK's leading independent race equality think tank and offers access to some interesting reports and blogs on racial equality.

## **4. Mentally Healthy Schools**

Mentally Healthy Schools brings together quality-assured mental health resources, information & advice for schools. Their resources focus on mental health themes, helping schools to explore ideas around diversity, self-belief, identity and the impact of racism on those who experience it. [This video is a good starting point.](#)

## **5. Twinkl**

This online educational publishing house has a large number of educational ideas and resources for teachers, including a good number of printable resources for children. It is subscription-based so do check if your school can access these.

## **6. BBC Teach**

A collection of resources to explore black history, heritage, culture and achievements with your class. Each resource is accompanied by teacher notes to aid classroom use. We recommend you start with [this article by Josiah Isles](#), an assistant headteacher who has written about his experiences within the education system as a black teacher in the UK. There is also an interesting [panel discussion programme](#) with ideas and best practice around teaching black and diverse histories and experiences

## **7. British Red Cross**

The activities on this website are aimed at secondary school pupils and highlight some exceptional British Red Cross volunteers and people who have helped others and the world with their kind acts and voluntary service.

## **8. Education World**

An online resource for schools based in the US, with a focus on the contribution made by African-Americans.

## **9. TES**

Teachers and parents can use this hub for information, advice and practical resources to better understand the experiences of black individuals. Within the hub we are highlighting Black British History and resources to support the teaching of anti-racism.

# FOR *PARENTS & CARERS*

***You may wish to inform parents and carers that you will be holding an event for Black History Month. Here is a sample letter you could use:***

Dear Parents and Carers

This year, to mark Black History Month, our school will be taking part in the Great Big Live Assembly. This is a 20-minute virtual assembly that will connect together more than 500 schools simultaneously - around 300,000 children. It will be held at 9.05am on October 10th.

The Great Big Live Assembly will celebrate the ways that schools up and down the UK are embracing those from a variety of backgrounds into their classrooms and communities. It will celebrate Black women from history who continue to inspire us all. It will reinforce the importance of respecting others, even those who appear very different. It will invite us all to play our part to make sure everybody feels welcome and valued.

The Great Big Live Assembly has been organised by the charity Sanctuary Foundation. Dr Krish Kandiah OBE, who leads the charity and will be hosting the assembly, has worked in child welfare for over 16 years. He is an inspirational communicator, children's author and diversity trainer. He is also an experienced foster carer who has received trauma training and will ensure the event is led in an engaging and sensitive way.

The Great Big Live Assembly will be co-hosted by a 12-year-old BAFTA-award winning journalist and BBC Presenter Gemma Hunt, best known for presenting Swashbuckle and Songs of Praise.

The Great Big Live Assembly will be interactive, informative and inspirational. It will encourage children to talk about the challenges and benefits of cultural diversity. We hope this will make a positive impact in our classroom and playground environment and beyond.

We recognise that this event may prompt questions about identity, injustice and prejudice and we have prepared some of our teachers to handle these questions sensitively.

If you would like to know more, please get in touch.

Yours sincerely

# LINK AND *TECH*

The technical set up for the Great Big Live Assembly is very simple.

The link to join the assembly is: <https://www.youtube.com/live/30NJFAIThDg?feature=share>

This link will send you to a closed YouTube channel.

Simply project this channel using your usual set up. You can adjust the volume and brightness in the usual way.

The channel will be broadcasting on a loop until 9.05am so you can get everything ready ahead of time.

At 9.05 we will begin the broadcast.

The Great Big Live Assembly will last approximately 20 minutes.





# FOLLOW UP *ACTIVITIES*

**To help the children reflect on what they have heard and seen in the Great Big Live Assembly, why not organise follow up activities that connect with Black History Month. Here are some ideas of ways you can connect cultural diversity learning with the curriculum.**

1. **Creative Writing:** Read and discuss the poem BLK History Month by Nikki Giovanni, and encourage children to create a similar poem using the first or last line as a prompt. Older children could choose a poem by Amanda Gorman as inspiration. Why not go on to write a poem about Giovanni or Gorman and enter it into the national poetry competition? <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/black-history-month-poetry-competition-2023/>
2. **Literacy:** Use one of our recommended books for a comprehension, reflection and creation exercise. Look through your own library for books by or about Black people. Which ones do you like best and why?
3. **Art:** Discover the artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby. She is Nigerian but lives in America and her art reflects the crossover between these two different cultures. Use her work to inspire individual art, or do a class collage project in the style of her famous portrait of Thelma Golden.
4. **Language:** Create a poster in a foreign language welcoming newcomers to your school. How can you ensure your poster reflects the diversity of the school and celebrates similarities and differences?
5. **Maths:** Watch this video by Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OCR8qG-Eb0> Imagine a piece of technology that could change the world for the better. Design it, annotate it, present it to the class. What do you need to make it a reality?
6. **Geography:** How many countries are represented in your class, in your town? Can you locate those countries on a globe, on a world map? What do you know about their different cultures? Focus in on Trinidad. What are the differences between Trinidad and the UK? How are we linked?
7. **PSHE:** Watch this short video, pausing as you go to discuss how Tina was feeling. How did she turn a difficult situation into something positive? What difference did she make? How does this inspire you? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks2-black-british-stories-christina-shingler/zc6mqfr>
8. **Drama:** Anansi folklore stories originate from Ghana but are known throughout the world. Anansi means spider - he is a trickster who cleverly outsmarts those around him. What tricks could Anansi play in your school? How will he get himself out of trouble? Act out your ideas.
9. **Music:** Talk about your favourite Black musicians. What is it you like about their music? Create a Spotify playlist for Black History Month. Write your own piece of music to introduce it.
10. **RE:** Read Chapter 5 of [Whistlestop Tales: Around the World in 10 Bible Stories](#). Compare it to the Bible account of Queen Esther. How did racism impact the people in the story? Why is this story relevant today?
11. **PE:** Talk about female Black sports heroes, for example Boxer Nicola Adams, Lionesses star Jess Carter, and Sprinter Dina Asher-Smith. Set up a mini-triathlon challenge of boxing, football and athletics skills in tribute to these women.
12. **History.** Create a living timeline using the information [in this poster](#). Each child could adopt a different character on the timeline. They can create and hold up an information sheet about their character. Write the historical date on the back of the information sheet. Visitors are invited to put the children in the correct order as per the rules of the card game [Timeline](#).
13. **Science.** Discover with the children notable scientists such as space scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, nurse Professor Dame Elizabeth Nneka Anionwu, biologist Dr. Vanessa Ezenwa and energy expert Dr. Eniola Fasan. Talk about how they solved problems. What new problems in space, medicine, and energy could be solved in the future?

# RESOURCES FOR *CHILDREN*

Feeling confident to talk about identity and race, diversion and inclusion is vital in our multi-cultural Britain today. The Great Big Live Assembly is a great opportunity to start that journey, but there are lots of resources out there to help you connect with bigger conversation and play your part in making the world a better place for all.



## **FYI News Club**

If you have students who love investigating the world around them and who want to be skilled-up and ready to spot fake news, join the First News FYI News Club! It's completely free to set up and run! You will be given free access to FYI: For Your Information, the BAFTA award winning weekly news show from Sky Kids, as well as free resources to run your club! Find out more here: <https://schools.firstnews.co.uk/fyi-news-club-form/>

You can sign up to get their Black History Month resources here: <https://schools.firstnews.co.uk/fne-newsletter/> which will be ready by 29th September 2023 and will include:

- A pull-out from this year's Black History Month special feature going out in the paper
- A pull-out from last year's Black History Month special feature in the paper
- A debate resource around the question 'Should every statue of anyone who was a slave owner be removed from our towns and cities?'
- A reading comprehension
- A 'Celebrating Our Sisters' resource featuring influential Black women
- A quiz
- Video content from Sky Kids FYI



## **Sky TV Videos**

SKY TV's FYI have a series of videos on refugees and asylum for the classroom. An example is available [here](#).



## **BBC Bitesize**

Check out these guides, videos and activities about Black history in the UK and worldwide



## **National Geographic Kids**

Discover the origins of Black History Month and the people that inspire us today.



## **Newsround**

Discover all about Black History Month with this BBC Children's programme video playlist



## **The Black Curriculum**

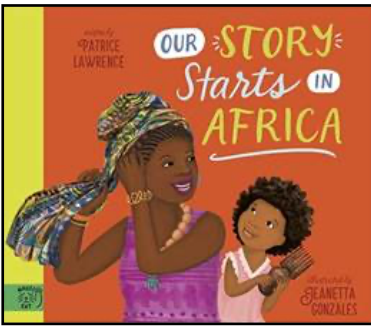
Watch through this playlist of inspirational Black British History Animations



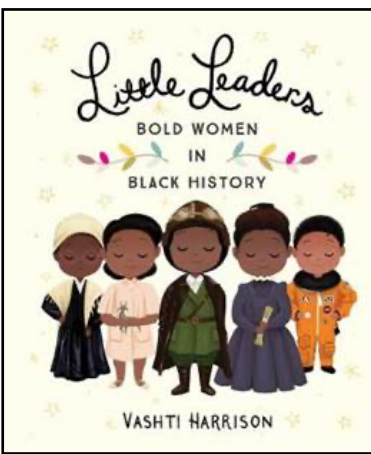
## **National Literacy Trust**

Discover more resources here as well as tips, ideas and recommended reading to enhance your learning.

# BOOKS FOR *KS1*



A beautifully told story of Black history, perfectly pitched at young children who want to learn more about their family – or anyone else’s family. Its a story about ancient combs, of warrior queens and treasures, of beautiful fabrics and of storytelling - all set in Africa.

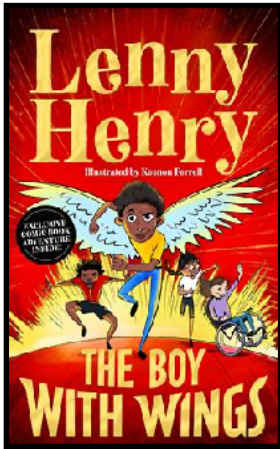


A beautiful and profound book, which chronicles the struggles and achievements of 50 historic and contemporary Black women from around the world. This is an inspiring book for girls and boys as it shows how a determined nature, ambition and hard work can make important change in the world.

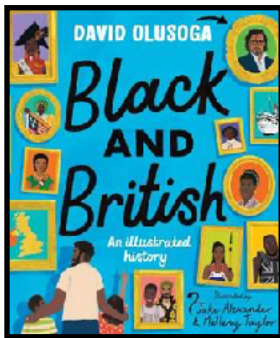


Rosa’s story is brought to life for a young audience in this wonderfully accessible picture book, with comic-style illustrations. As well as learning about a key figure in American history, children will also understand the importance of being kind, fair and always standing up to injustice.

# BOOKS FOR *KS2*



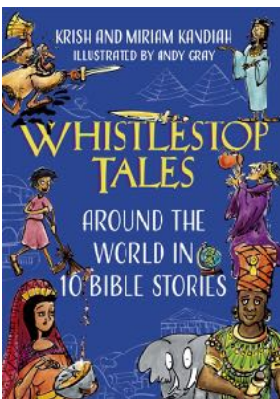
Sir Lenny Henry said he wrote *The Boy With Wings* because he didn't see Black heroes in the books he read growing up, and wants all children to see themselves appear centre stage in exciting, inspiring stories. This is a very funny and exciting story, that is brilliantly inclusive and raises issues such as bullying, racism, adoption, fostering and disability. Many children will be able to see themselves reflected in this book.



When he was growing up, David Olusoga didn't think there had been any Black people in British history because nothing he learned at school told him that there was. This fascinating illustrated book features key Black figures from Roman, Tudor, Stuart and Georgian and Victorian Britain and tells their fascinating and often heartbreaking stories. This is a truly brilliant and well-realised book that would be great for every classroom.



This exciting collection features informative, interesting and inspirational stories from the lives of Black figures in history – from Roman times to the present day. Each story is just the right length to be read at bedtime and all are written and illustrated by Black creators from around the world. With their unfussy text, they are also ideal for young, independent readers who are sure to revisit them time and again.



In ten action-packed stories, this book looks at racial diversity in the Bible by looking at characters in their original context and cultures. Krish and Miriam Kandiah are a mixed race couple with mixed race children and they bring their expertise as foster parents and theologians in these compelling and empathetic stories that can help children from all races encounter the wonders of the Bible and significant figures from ancient history.

# EMPATHY WEEK

We're supporting @empathyweek - an award-winning, annual schools event that uses the power of film, education and storytelling events to develop empathy in students.

Since 2020, Empathy Week has engaged 175,000+ students (aged 5-18) in over 40 countries. Don't miss out on their biggest week yet!

*Here's a taster of what to expect:*

**The 2024 theme:** This year, Empathy Week is diving deep into the theme of 'Home', exploring important social issues such as the refugee crisis, homelessness, nationality, religion, and fostering positive relationships.

**In-person experiences:** Like [their partnership with Snapchat in 2023](#), Empathy Week hopes to bring more workshops and events in 2024 that are beyond the curriculum and *beyond* fun!

**Online Opportunities:** Age-differentiated webinars, assemblies and events will allow for students, teachers and parents to learn from inspiring speakers and participate in live Q&As.

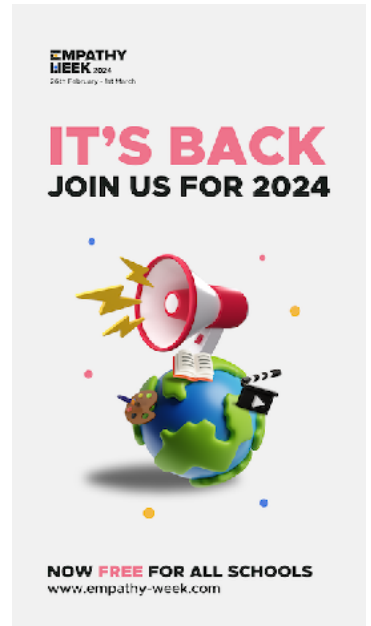
**Professional Growth:** There'll also be fantastic opportunities for adult learning and professional development, including free CPD training.

**Now Free for All Schools:** That's right, Empathy Week 2024 is FREE for all schools. So spread the word!

Since 2020, Empathy Week has engaged over **175,000 students** in over **40 countries**.

**REGISTER TODAY** at <https://www.empathy-week.com/> and join the mission to build the #EmpathyGeneration.

Register your class or school now and join us in building the #EmpathyGeneration at [www.empathy-week.com/](https://www.empathy-week.com/)



# FEEDBACK

We would greatly value your feedback

You can fill in the [feedback form](#) here. Many thanks for joining us this year on this journey.



# SANCTUARY *FOUNDATION*

Sanctuary Foundation is a charity led by Dr Krish Kandiah committed to working quickly and collaboratively to find solutions to issues involving vulnerable people groups.

Following successful civil society and community-based campaigns for Syrian, Afghan and Hong Kong new arrivals, Sanctuary Foundation has been catalysing Ukrainian refugee welcome and support across the whole of the UK.

Sanctuary Foundation have partnered with Save the Children, UNHCR, Choose Love, Royal College of Paediatricians, Anna Freud Centre, The Children's Commissioner and many others providing training and inspiration to thousands of hosts.

It also raises funds, provides information, undertakes projects and events, and distributes grants to help sponsorship succeed and refugees find welcome, resettlement and integration.

[www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk](http://www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number: 1198534