



Black History Month February 2022

Every February, people across Canada participate in Black History Month with events and festivities that honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities. The 2022 theme for Black History Month is: "February and Forever: Celebrating Black History today and every day," which focuses on recognizing the daily contributions that Black Canadians make to Canada. We would like to encourage our fellow Canadians to take some time this month, and all through the year, to consider how you can learn about and promote awareness of concepts such as decolonization, intersectional feminism, and the impact of race on social and economic justice. While February is Black History Month in Canada specifically, it is equally important to recognize the accomplishments of and struggles faced by Black individuals globally.



In the hopes that you may find some helpful information to begin or continue learning about these important concepts, we've compiled a list of resources and information on both Black History events and notable individuals to learn from.

Websites to check out:

[Government of Canada](#); Canadian Heritage: this page contains information on Black History Month in Canada, noteworthy figures in Canadian history, information on Black history organizations and educational resources, highlighted insight into the role of Black Canadian women, as well as details of some significant events in Black Canadian history.

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#); Timeline of Black History: this interactive webpage provides a chronological timeline of stories, experiences, and accomplishments of people of African origin who had an impact on Canada. They have highlighted that Black history did not begin in recent times in Canada, but in ancient times in Africa.

[Ontario Black History Society](#); The Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) is a registered Canadian charity, dedicated to the study, preservation and promotion of Black History and heritage. The Society aims to encourage public interest in Black History through the:

- Recognition and documentation of the contributions of peoples of African descent and their collective histories, past and present, through education, research and collaboration.
- Development and support of educational initiatives and exhibits.
- Inclusion of Black History material in school curricula.

CBCnews; [23 historical black Canadians you should know](#): another interactive page, this article contains images of 23 Canadian's who hugely contributed to Canada's culture and legacy.

Books you might enjoy:

[Washington Black](#), by Esi Edugyan; "When two English brothers arrive at a Barbados sugar plantation, they bring with them a darkness beyond what the slaves have already known. Washington Black – an eleven year-old field slave – is horrified to find himself chosen to live in the quarters of one of these men. But the man is not as Washington expects him to be. His new master is the eccentric Christopher Wilde – naturalist, explorer, inventor and abolitionist – whose obsession to perfect a winged flying machine disturbs all who know him. Washington is initiated into a world of wonder: a world where the night sea is set alight with fields of jellyfish, where a simple cloth canopy can propel a man across the sky, where even a boy born in chains may embrace a life of dignity and meaning – and where two people, separated by an impossible divide, can begin to see each other as human."

[Butter Honey Pig Bread](#), by Francesca Ekwuyasi; "Butter Honey Pig Bread is a story of choices and their consequences, of motherhood, of the malleable line between the spirit and the mind, of finding new homes and mending old ones, of voracious appetites, of queer love, of friendship, faith, and above all, family."

[The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power](#); by Desmond Cole, "A bracing, provocative, and perspective-shifting book from one of Canada's most celebrated and uncompromising writers, Desmond Cole. *The Skin We're In* will spark a national conversation, influence policy, and inspire activists."

[Africville](#), by Jeffrey Colvin; "A richly woven story, structured as a triptych, *Africville* chronicles the lives of three generations of the Sebolt family—Kath Ella, her son, Omar/Etienne, and her grandson Warner—whose lives unfold against the tumultuous events of the twentieth century, from the Great Depression

of the 1930s, through the social protests of the 1960s, to the economic upheavals of the 1980s.”

Many public libraries have compiled reading lists for adults and children to highlight Black authors and stories, and many are also hosting events. We would suggest checking your local library’s website to see if they have a list of their own. If you need somewhere to start, you can check out Waterloo Public Library’s events and book lists [here](#).

Podcasts by Black creators:

[Portraits of Black Canadians](#); “Find out more about black Canadians who contributed to the building of Canada and who are making their mark every day. Radio Canada International has produced a series of vignettes spotlighting some of the black Canadians that have marked the country’s past, as well as those that are marking Canada’s present.”

[The Secret Life of Canada](#); “The Secret Life of Canada is a podcast about the country you know and the stories you don't. Join hosts Leah-Simone Bowen and Falen Johnson as they reveal the beautiful, terrible and weird histories of this land. Season 4 launches February 3, 2022, with episodes releasing twice a month.”

[Black Canadian Creators](#); “Black Canadian Creators is a show that is perfect for anyone looking to start their journey or get inspired by fellow content creators. Hosted by Facebook community founder and podcast host/producer Sherley Joseph in this seasonal interview-style series. Spotighting a wide range of online or offline Canadian creatives who identify as Black, African, Africadian, Caribbean, or Mixed originators living in Canada or ex-pat creators living abroad. Learn from new or veteran Bloggers, Podcasters, Journalists, Authors, Writers, YouTubers, Photographers, Videographers, Directors, Musicians, Visual Artists, Producers, Content Strategists, Influencers, and more. Discussing who they are, how they started, where they are going on their content journey, sharing their tips and inspirations.”

[Black Tea](#); “Toronto is a multicultural hotspot. But the diversity that makes the city special isn’t often reflected in the stories we hear and the discussions we have. Black Tea will change that. Dalton Higgins and Melayna Williams are here to bring important and uncomfortable Black community conversations out in the open, and to have some laughs while doing it.”

Blogs to explore:

[Re-Imagining Black History Month: An Equity-Informed Approach](#); A blog post by KOJO Institute, a leading consultancy that partners with organizations to unlock their potential by navigating the challenges connected to equity, bias, diversity, inclusion anti-oppression and anti-racism.

Excerpt - "Across Canada, organizations and institutions spend February celebrating the accomplishments, contributions, and culture of Black Canadians. Corporations often recognize African, Black, and Caribbean food, art, music, and customs and integrate these acknowledgements into their marketing efforts. Government bodies plan events to acknowledge Black changemakers and notable figures who helped to shape Canadian history. Schools host assemblies to honour prominent Black alumni and community members and introduce elements of Black history to their curricula.

These observances are all important ways of acknowledging the impact Black Canadians continue to have on this nation. But they are not enough. Current approaches to Black history month typically fail to look beyond the surface. They sanitize uncomfortable truths about the history of Black people in Canada and the way those realities contribute to the present-day inequities Black Canadians face."

[Facing Canada: A Facing History Community Blog](#); a collection of blog posts from Facing Canada and vetted educators sharing resources and tools for building classrooms and learning environments that encourage equity and inclusivity.

Excerpt - "In this blog post, Ontario educator, Uthish Ganesh, discusses how he set the foundation for the deep and complex subject matter in the African Diaspora course by focusing the first unit on building community, centering an equity approach and creating space for identity affirming activities. This process created necessary space to explore the layers of identity and its interplay with society and build bridges of commonality, understanding and empathy between students of all backgrounds."

Global initiatives and Notable non-Canadians to learn about:

[The Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa \(IMCHA\) initiative](#); IMCHA seeks to improve maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes by strengthening health systems, using primary healthcare as an entry point.

[Kimberlé Crenshaw](#); a law professor and leading authority in the areas of civil rights, Black feminist legal theory, and race, racism, and the law. Her work has been foundational in two fields of study that have come to be known by terms that she coined: critical race theory and intersectionality.

[Sojourner Truth](#); Born into slavery in 1797, Isabella Baumfree, who later changed her name to Sojourner Truth, would become one of the most powerful advocates for human rights in the nineteenth century. At the 1851 Women's Rights Convention held in Akron, Ohio, Sojourner Truth delivered what is now recognized as one of the most famous abolitionist and women's rights speeches in American history. While there is some controversy surrounding the actual words of the speech, either way you read it, [it is powerful](#).

While we hope the resources above provide you with a good starting point, or perhaps someone new to learn from, please keep in mind that our very few suggestions barely scratch the surface of learning opportunities. We encourage everyone to take some time to think about how and why racism still exists in Canada, where there is conflict in relation to race, and how we can each help to resolve these issues.