

Trailblazer
Curriculum
Guide

Introduction

In 2019, the Los Angeles arts and culture organization Clockshop published *Trailblazer*, a book about an exceptional woman, Delilah Leontium Beasley (1871-1934). Born and raised in Ohio, Beasley began to write for a community newspaper when she was just 12 years old, and eventually became the first Black woman columnist for a major newspaper, the Oakland Tribune. She was also a self-taught historian. The great achievement of her life was a book about the history of African Americans in California, published in 1919, titled *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*. She worked on this project for almost a decade, with no formal support or funding, travelling up and down the West Coast, collecting photos, documents, genealogies, and conducting interviews.

At the time, few people considered Beasley's topic worthy of attention. Indeed, when she finally finished her manuscript, she couldn't find a publisher. She persevered, however, and decided to self-publish the book. Eventually, her research was recognized as a priceless resource. Without Beasley's efforts, the early history of African Americans in the West would be lost.

To increase awareness of Beasley's pioneering achievement, Clockshop commissioned two works of writing. The first, "Our Endless Ongoing," is a short-story of historical fiction by Dana Johnson that re-imagines Beasley's life. The second, "Deeds Ever Lasting," is a contextual essay by Ana Cecilia Alvarez that collects the few biographical facts known about Beasley. These two pieces, combined with a selection of historical photographs reprinted from Beasley's book, comprise *Trailblazer*.

This curriculum accompanies *Trailblazer*. Like Beasley, we hope to enrich understanding of Black history in the West, but we're also interested in how Beasley herself brought this history to the surface. Beasley never doubted that her work was inherently valuable. She decided for herself what was important for the future and what should be saved. And she wanted her book to be read widely—for people to flip through its pages and see others who look like them, or their grandma or uncle or cousin. We'd like to imagine that seeing her legacy and contributions taught in schools would bring her joy as well.

We hope that *Trailblazer* creates dynamic conversations with your students, and extends the legacy of this remarkable pioneer.

Ever grateful,

Clockshop

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Summary of Contents

This curriculum was designed to meet History and English Common Core standards for 11-12th grade students. Teachers may opt to teach just one lesson, or to use this curriculum in its entirety, as the basis of a 4-6 week unit. We believe the curriculum could be easily adapted for younger grades, or for Social Science or Leadership classes.

The curriculum is framed by 10 Essential Questions that focus on the themes of History, Trailblazing, and Inclusion. The Essential Questions are followed by the relevant Common Core Standards, and suggested Reading Strategies for the two texts. Each Lesson Plan assumes that students will have already completed the reading and demonstrated comprehension.

The six lessons vary in suggested duration from 1-3 days. They can be excerpted or taught in order, though Lesson 4 is designed to follow Lesson 3. The suggested duration can be easily lengthened with reference to the suggested Extensions, and/or the Resources listed in Appendix 1. Lesson 6 is specific to History State Standards, and Lesson 2 specific to English; the remainder is applicable to both.

Each Lesson Plan includes Learning Objectives, Curriculum Standards, Materials, Background, Hook, Procedures, and suggestions for Assessment and Extensions. The Lesson Plans are followed by Appendixes 1-3. Appendix 1 includes links to extra resources organized by theme; Appendix 2 contains a full index of terms for each essay; and Appendix 3 is a handout for use in Lesson 1.

Clockshop promotes equity, whole student learning, and a justice-lens approach to classroom teaching. There may be students who need assistance accessing this material at their appropriate academic levels. Classroom teachers should differentiate accordingly and make modifications and accommodations to ensure that all students are served appropriately.

You can find a Google docs version of this curriculum [here](#).

Common Core & CA State Standards

English Language Arts

8th Grade:

- **Reading Informational Texts**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.9

Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

- **Reading Literature**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9

Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

9th-10th Grade:

- **Reading Informational Texts**

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

- **Reading Literature**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9

Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

11th-12th Grade:

- **Reading Informational Texts**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- **Reading Literature**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

History/Social Studies

8th Grade:

- **Common Core State Standards**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- **California State Standards**

- › 8.8 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

9th-10th Grade:

- **Common Core State Standards**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

- **California State Standards**

- › 10.3 Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

11th-12th Grade:

- **Common Core State Standards**

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

- **California State Standards**

- › 11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s.
- › 12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

Themes & Essential Questions

History & Its Storytellers

- Who writes the story of history?
- Who benefits from the story being told?
- How does someone's background and experience impact their story?
- How do we imagine the lives of people in the past?

Trailblazing

- What makes someone a pioneer?
- What characteristics do pioneers have?
- How do individuals make their mark on the world?

Inclusion

- Why do some people get excluded from history?
- How do we become aware of these exclusions?
- How do we prevent them from happening?
- What are some expectations of gender and race that we're seeing in this text? What if those expectations weren't present?

Common Core State Standards

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: Some ELA teachers who have read the primary texts for this guide have given us the feedback that the text is potentially more appropriate for 11th/12th graders. We acknowledge that this varies student to student and school to school, so we chose to include standards for all high school grades.

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (9-10 & 11-12)

READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6**
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

READING LITERATURE

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

WRITING

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.**
Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B**
Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3**

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3**
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7**
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B**
Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4**
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6**
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

History/Social Studies Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9**
- Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Reading Strategies

You can find the PDF of both Trailblazer stories [here](#).

Orientation to Ana Cecilia Alvarez’s “Deeds Ever Lasting”

In this biographical essay, Alvarez writes a historical account of the life of Delilah L. Beasley, a journalist and historian who studied California history, specifically black Californians. There is very little information available about Beasley, so writing her biography is a difficult task.

Orientation to Dana Johnson’s “Our Endless Ongoing”

This short story is a work of historical fiction, meaning the author used her imagination to fill in the gaps of Delilah L. Beasley’s life.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: For Johnson’s “Our Endless Ongoing”, we suggest omitting two following two sections for a shorter read: “Berkeley 1915” & “California 1920”.

Selection of Reading Strategies for before/during/after reading:

1. Reading Log handout using these prompts:

What is the story about?

What does the main character want?

What is the author’s purpose?

How does the character interact with other characters?

What personal connections can you make to the story or the main character?

2. Cornell Notes/T-Chart

List information (dates, events, quotes, details, etc.) as you read on the left side of the constructed chart; after you read, on the right hand side, rewrite each note as a question.

3. Socratic Seminars

4. KWL Chart (Option #1)

Using a 3-section chart, list all that you know about [Black history in the West], things you’d like to know, and what you learned from the reading.

5. KWL Chart (Option #2)

Using a 3-section chart, list 3 facts that surprised you; 3 quotes that stand out; and 3 questions you have.

6. Structured Student Talk

In small groups, use strategies such as Clock Partners; Think, Pair, Share; Talking Stick; Give One, Get One; or Lines of Communication.

Writing Prompts

The following questions can be used for entrance/exit tickets, short answer questions on a test, written and verbal group reflections, or as essay prompts.

“Deeds Ever Lasting”

1. In “Deeds Ever Lasting,” the author wrote about Delilah L. Beasley “She wanted to do more than selectively tailor her book toward the positive and exceptional. Instead, she was interested in the deeper work of resisting conscious **historical amnesia.**” Why would someone want to write about things other than the “positive and exceptional”? What do you think the author means by historical amnesia?
2. When Delilah L. Beasley died in 1934, members of the Delilah Beasley Club hosted her memorial service, passing out cards to attendees. These cards read “Every life casts its shadow, my life plus others make a power to move the world.” Analyze this quote using other citations from the story. How does this pledge relate to Delilah’s career? How does it apply more generally to historical representation?
3. In “Deeds Ever Lasting,” the author includes a quote from writer James Baldwin (1924-1987) that says: “Millions of anonymous people is what history is about.” What do you think Baldwin means by this? What connections can you make between this quote and history today?

“Our Endless Ongoing”

1. Using context clues, select a person other than Delilah L. Beasley from “Our Endless Ongoing” and write either a diary entry or a letter from their perspective. What would they have to say about Delilah’s work?
2. In “Our Endless Ongoing,” author Dana Johnson said about Delilah L. Beasley, “what on earth would possess a woman of no means, no academic or historical training, to obsessively collect the histories of black people?” What motivated Delilah to do this work?
3. Johnson’s story weaves together fiction and historical research about Delilah L. Beasley’s life, having to use her imagination to fill in some of the gaps. If you had the opportunity to meet Delilah and ask her questions about herself, what would you ask her and why?

Activities

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: You can find graphic organizers for several of these lessons [here!](#)

Activities

Lesson #1: Newspaper Column Page 14

Lesson #2: Acrostic Poem Page 16

Lesson #3: Conducting an Oral History Page 18

Lesson #4: Oral History Zine Page 20

Lesson #5: Critical Question Carousel Page 22

Lesson #6: Expository Group Presentation Page 25

Lesson #1: Newspaper Column

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

- English & History

TIME FRAME:

- 3-5 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- How does someone's background and experience impact their story?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Students will read and analyze various news sources.
- Students will discuss model texts, the author's purpose, and information presented from news articles.
- Students will construct their own news column.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2

TEXT:

“Deeds Ever Lasting” by Ana Cecilia Alvarez

MATERIALS:

Class copies of chosen news article, class copies of Beasley's "Activities Among Negroes" News Column, class copies of a 2nd example newspaper column selected by the teacher, highlighters, pen/pencil, overhead projector

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

As a journalist, Delilah L. Beasley wrote a weekly column for the Oakland Tribune called "Activities Among Negroes" until she passed away in 1934. This column highlighted accomplishments and community announcements among black folks in Oakland, from graduations and baptisms to announcing the arrival of out-of-town visitors. She believed that even these small stories were newsworthy.

Students have read "Deeds Ever Lasting" and have reading notes. Students will benefit from having prior knowledge regarding various news sources, including how to scrutinize sources for credibility.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Locate a 3-6 minute video clip of a significant, local event. [We like this one.] Watch with the students at the beginning of the class. Through class discussion, analyze the story. Establish the time period, and discuss what information is included.

PROCEDURES:

Teacher provides each student with a copy of the example news article/column.

Class reads the column together, discussing questions such as: Where is the most important

information located? Why is the information being published? What elements are not included in the column and why? What is the author's purpose?

EXPLAIN AND DESCRIBE THE PROJECT:

To organize and construct their own news column about a community specific to their lives, i.e. school, neighborhood, congregation, team, etc. The column should cover one week of activities. Students will first define their community of focus and then use research (local newspapers, interviews with neighbors and friends, phone calls) to document the week's happenings. The "column" can take any form: typed or written by hand, recorded as a podcast or radio segment, or presented as a blog entry. Remember, no announcement is too small! All columns should be titled.

Encourage students to include events such as weddings, celebrations, openings of new businesses, births/deaths, fundraisers, athletic competitions, field trips, contests, etc.

Consider using an I do, We do, You do format, in which the teacher begins by writing their own column. This project may also be accomplished as a group activity.

ASSESSMENT:

Observed participation and engagement in reading, note-taking, and discussion; completion of news column.

EXTENSIONS:

- Go on a trip around the school to different classrooms to "spread the news."
- Compile the column news and include a version in the daily school announcements.
- Rather than a single column, write 3 short columns about 3 different events

Lesson #2: Acrostic Poem

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

English

TIME FRAME:

1-2 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- Who gets to be a pioneer?
- What characteristics do pioneers have?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Students will understand the definition of “acrostic poem.”
- Students will write two acrostic poems.
- Students will recognize someone in their life who is a pioneer.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.B

TEXT:

“Deeds Ever Lasting” by Ana Cecilia Alvarez

MATERIALS:

Pen & paper

(optional) collage materials, scissors, erasers, fine tip sharpies/pens, etc.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Delilah Beasley was first honored by the members of a special club, the Delilah Beasley Club. After Beasley passed away in 1934, club members kept her memory alive. At each club meeting, they took an oath. The oath was actually an acrostic poem based on Beasley’s first name, Delilah. In this style of poetry, you use letters in a name or word to create new words. The first part of the Delilah Beasley Club oath looked like this:

D.....Deeds

E.....Ever

L.....Lasting

I.....In

L.....Lending

A.....A

H.....Hand

Students have read “Deeds Ever Lasting” and have reading notes. Students will benefit from having prior knowledge regarding various news sources, including how to scrutinize sources for credibility.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Journal prompt and/or class discussion: Ask students to write about someone they look up to. It can be someone they know, or someone they admire but have never met. What makes that person a trailblazer, pioneer, or leader?

PROCEDURES:

Ask students to think of someone they look up to, a person who set a positive example, taught them a valuable lesson, or played a positive role in their lives.

Why is this person significant in your life? Engage students in sharing responses as a class, or in partners, or small groups.

Teacher should begin by modeling the assignment: Identify your own life influence, and write an acrostic poem about that person on the whiteboard, engaging in thinking-out-loud creation.

Students engage in brainstorming sessions with their peers to decide on a subject and begin listing content.

Students independently construct their acrostic poem. Teacher encourages a few students to read their acrostic poem to the class and briefly explain their subject choice.

Teacher brings the class back together to revisit the journal prompt at the beginning of class. Examine the definition of “pioneer” and talk about the various ways in which someone can be a pioneer. Brainstorm a list of potential people. (Alternatively, teacher provides a list of “pioneers” and students select one.)

Students write acrostic poem on their chosen, or provided, pioneer.

ASSESSMENT:

Oral presentation; class share out; gallery walk with feedback notebook; poems are submitted as assignments.

EXTENSIONS:

- Encourage students to write a poem that forms a grammatical sentence, like the DELILAH acrostic.
- Allow students to build the poem from any letter in the name, not only the initial letter.
- Add visual and graphic elements to the poem.
- Stage a class poetry reading.
- Have students send their first acrostic poem to their subjects.

Lesson #3: Conducting an Oral History

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

English & History

TIME FRAME:

3-5 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- How do individuals mark their mark on the world?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Students will brainstorm and collaboratively formulate interview questions.
- Students will conduct and record an interview using questions constructed in class.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.B
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

TEXT:

“Deeds Ever Lasting” by Ana Cecilia Alvarez

“Our Endless Ongoing” by Dana Johnson

MATERIALS:

paper, pens, overhead projector/whiteboard, whiteboard pens, links for students to listen to sample interviews, [optional: digital audio recorders]

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

For many generations, stories have been passed down through the oral tradition of storytelling. Nowadays, we have a lot of ways of preserving that history to make sure it can be shared with future generations for years to come. However, the types of stories that are recorded are not always treated equally, and it's common for entire demographics of people to be left out of these histories. Delilah L. Beasley dedicated her life to documenting these lesser-known stories of Black Californians by traveling across the state, talking with elders, and recording their stories.

Teacher will have considered the possibility of students recording their interviews via audio or video, and make appropriate equipment preparations. Alternately, all interviews can be noted on paper.

Teacher will also have compiled a template list of interview questions, to help guide student discussion.

Teachers may want to use the [resources in Appendix 1](#) to extend the Hook/Intro activity, and spend significant class time listening/watching various oral histories, followed by critical group discussion.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Teacher should record their own video/audio interview with someone and share it with the class. Alternately, students can listen to a clip from the sources in Appendix 1 under “Oral History.”

Class should discuss the purpose of the interview, the story that was told, and the most valuable pieces of information.

PROCEDURES:

First, students will formulate interview questions. In partners, small groups, or as a class, discuss potential questions. Consider what makes an effective interview, and what kinds of questions will yield the most information.

If done as a whole class, teacher takes notes, writing down possible questions on a large compiled list. Partner and small group brainstorm should have designated note-takers.

Once possible questions have been generated, ask students to pair up and practice interviewing their partner using some of those questions. Once they’ve completed their interviews, have them share their interviews with another pair of students.

Instruct students to choose 6-10 questions as the minimum for their interview; ask students to spend at least 30 minutes with their subject.

Students will identify an elder in their life and conduct and record an interview. They should return to the classroom with their interview material. Instruct students to select 3 elements from their interview that were especially powerful, exciting, surprising, funny, or sad. Allow time for students to record their 3 elements on a notecard. When the notecards are complete, instruct students to walk around the room and talk to at least 3 different people about their interview highlights, as recorded on their notecards. Each student should share in turn, and then find a new partner to speak with. Teacher should facilitate and/or engage in peer-to-peer conversations as appropriate.

After students have shared, instruct them to return to their seats and briefly facilitate a classroom discussion: What was some information you heard about other interviews? What were some elements from your own interview that you found value in sharing? What similarities/differences did you hear in regards to your interview, person, or story?

Instruct students that they will use what they’ve learned about their subject to create a ‘zine’ biography in the next lesson.

ASSESSMENT:

Engagement in class discussion; engagement in peer-to-peer sharing; completion of interview

EXTENSIONS:

- Record interviews as videos and have students share clips (with permission from interviewee).
- Assign reflective writing piece about the interview experience, or an expository essay about the differences between an oral history interview and a news column.
- Have students write and send thank you letters to their interviewees.

Lesson #4: Oral History Zine

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

English & History

TIME FRAME:

3-4 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- How do we address and prevent and amend exclusions from history?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Students will understand the definition of “self-publish.”
- Students will create a zine to demonstrate understanding of significant quotes and learned material during the interview.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.B
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

TEXT:

“Deeds Ever Lasting” by Ana Cecilia Alvarez

“Our Endless Ongoing” by Dana Johnson

MATERIALS:

interview materials from Lesson #3, construction paper, markers, glue, scissors, stapler, samples of zines & this [“What is a zine?”](#) PDF.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Delilah L. Beasley dedicated her life to documenting the stories of Black Californians by traveling across the state and talking with elders. When she finished her book, no one wanted to publish it because Beasley was Black and wasn’t considered an “official” historian. Instead of giving up, Beasley self-published the book without an editor. She paid for the publication out of her own pocket, and sold copies of the book herself.

One way that people today self-publish is by making zines. A “zine” is a kind of handmade book—the word “zine” is short for magazine. All you need is paper, pen, and a stapler. (If you want to make more than one copy, you’ll need a photocopier.) People make zines for all kinds of reasons. They’re cheap to make and easy to give away, and you can write anything you want about any topic. Zines can be fiction or non-fiction or a mix of both. They can also just include pictures. Many people collect zines, and you can now even check them out at some libraries.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Teacher can bring a small collection of zines to class and give students time to browse through them. Alternatively, the teacher can share this [“What is a zine?”](#) PDF with students and facilitate a

conversation around the benefits and radical history of self-publishing. Teacher can share [this Issuu link](#) with students so they can browse zines digitally and see the different ways they can look.

PROCEDURES:

Students will make a zine based on the life of the subject of their oral interview. The zine can be simple: paper folded and stapled, and may take the form of a graphic novel. The zine should represent a condensed version of the interview; students should use quotes and illustrations to highlight important content.

ASSESSMENT:

Engagement in class discussion about the zine-making process; Completion of zine

EXTENSIONS:

- Have students send a copy of their zine to their interviewee along with a thank you letter.
- Students can create an online infographic or PowerPoint that synthesizes their interview.
- Schedule a “zine-trade” day.

Lesson #5: Question Carousel

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

English & History

TIME FRAME:

2-3 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- Who writes the story of history?
- Who benefits from that story being told?
- How does someone's background and experience impact their story?
- What makes someone a pioneer?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Students will use notes and accumulated knowledge from reading to collaboratively construct two high level questions.
- Students will discuss and respond in writing to questions posed by classmates.
- Students will summarize peer written responses and orally present information to the class.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.A
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4

TEXT:

“Our Endless Ongoing” by Dana Johnson

MATERIALS:

Large Post-It easel pads or other large paper sheets, markers, notes from reading; consider photocopying or projecting sentence frames.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Students should have reading notes from “Our Endless Ongoing” to utilize in this lesson. Students understand the differences between low and high level questions, as defined by Blooms Taxonomy, and can recognize and write a high level question (Blooms Level 5 or 6). This activity will be accomplished with more ease if students are familiar with the Carousel strategy.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Have students retrieve their notes from the critical readings of the text. Give students 2-3 minutes to highlight, mark, and note 3-5 important facts/details from the reading. Students need to consider why these specific pieces of information are significant to the entirety of the story—whether they play a role in character development, plot, etc.

PROCEDURES:

In small groups (possibly pre-determined), students will draw on their reading notes to verbally share with each other. Sharing should follow specific sentence frames, which can be projected in the classroom or included on a handout. Each student should share 1 sentence from each category, for a total of 3 sentences. (Sentence frames are adapted from [E.L. Achieve.](#))

TO PRESENT AN IDEA:

I think...

I noticed that...

I found it interesting that...

One thing/Something to consider is...

One thing/Something that caught my attention was...

TO SUPPORT THINKING:

“Our Endless Ongoing”/Dana Johnson states that...

... is/was an example of...

According to Dana Johnson/Delilah Beasley, it is clear that...

A close reading of... suggests/clarifies/reveals...

Based on the information from... we can assume that...

TO BUILD ON IDEAS:

I also think that...

That makes me think/remind me of...

Your idea/comment reinforces/ is related to...

Based on your idea/comment, I think...

So if we already know..., we can predict/infer...

When sentence sharing is complete, transition the class back to teacher-led instruction to explain next steps.

Have student groups collaboratively formulate two high level questions about the content, character actions, motivations, experiences, or story elements. High level questions will emphasize evaluation, analyzing, or creating new information;

encourage students to consult Bloom's Taxonomy to help define high level questions. Before students begin, they should delegate group roles: facilitator, scribe, timekeeper, and oral presenter.

As high level questions are brainstormed, discussed, and formulated, teacher moves around the room and facilitates.

[Examples of high level questions:

How does Delilah Beasley show evidence that her writing and her book are more important than herself?

On p. 15 Mr. Peters asks Delilah, “Why are you doing this?” She responds, “Because it is in the best interest of our race.” What does she mean by this statement and why does she share her reasoning with Mr. Peters at that moment?

What are 2-3 values, or life lessons, we can learn from Beasley’s experiences in “Our Endless Ongoing”?]

Once each group has formulated two questions, instruct the scribe to create a graphic note-taking tool that allows space for other groups to respond to the questions. This may look like a grid or a graph, depending on the number of groups and how many pieces of paper are used.

All groups clearly write their questions on their note-taking tool.

Teacher explains the carousel concept, designating expectations and time frames.

When students have understood instruction, they will begin to rotate around the room in their small groups. At each grid, they will discuss the questions and respond in writing in the allocated space. Teacher gives time reminders and prompts to rotate. The chosen group facilitator will guide these conversations and the scribe will write the final answers.

When the groups return to their original easel, the facilitator should read aloud to their group each response to their questions.

Using highlighters, markers, or pens, group members should identify similarities and differences in the various responses. Allow time for groups to discuss the way their peers responded to their high level questions. Students should analyze and summarize their peers' responses to each question. The oral presenter will present this summary to the whole class.

ASSESSMENT:

Group responses to peer's questions, oral presentation of summarized material, general participation/engagement, notes from prior lessons, fulfillment of role responsibilities.

EXTENSIONS:

- Reflection paper on process and group work: What went well and what didn't? How did you organize your time? What did you learn? What grade do you deserve, and what grade do your peers deserve? [Questions can be used as a prompt or assigned.]

Lesson #6: Historical Fiction Narrative Writing Essay

SUBJECT OF FOCUS:

English & History

TIME FRAME:

2-5 days

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

- Who writes the story of history?
- How do we imagine the lives of people in the past?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- Student will identify and implement 10 known facts based on prior research.
- Student will construct and implement 10 imagined/made up/fictional aspects of their designated person from history.
- Students will synthesize information learned from a variety of sources to demonstrate understanding in their own historical fiction narrative piece.

CURRICULUM STANDARD(S):

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3.B

TEXT:

“Our Endless Ongoing” by Dana Johnson

MATERIALS:

Technological devices and graphic organizer for brainstorming, drafting, or outlining a story/essay.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

Students have spent extensive time conducting research, collaborating in small groups, constructing a slideshow or other visual aid, and teaching their classmates about a designated topic or person. Students may have prior knowledge of literary elements and techniques, including character development, figurative language, or plot. Students may also have prior knowledge in regards to 1st person and 3rd person narratives. Most students will benefit from teacher modeling, group collaborative sessions, graphic organizers, and proofreading/editing activities to help construct their essay.

HOOK/INTRODUCTION:

Play clip from East Bay Yesterday podcast*, followed by journal write, whole class discussion, or partner share out with prompt: How can someone tell the story of another when factual information about that person is limited? How does Dana Johnson bring Beasley to life? For example, what did Johnson know about Beasley’s coat? [It was old, she needed to use it for a blanket.] What did she imagine? [The faded color, the dirt.]

*Suggested clip is 1:28-5:02, but consider a longer segment.

PROCEDURES:

- Teacher will choose 3-5 excerpts, quotes, or statements from Dana Johnson’s “Our Endless Ongoing”, some of which represent factual information, and the others imagined by the author. Here are some sample excerpts:
 1. “Mrs. Peters had welcomed Delilah into her home, but looked at her askance after gesturing for her to sit down. Her dark eye had the blue rings of time around her irises. She was a venerable woman, as grand as the parlor they sat in, but the couch was lumpy and had a deep indentation in the cushion, as if it were meant to cradle her bottom.”
 2. “Light streamed into the room, and through her pain she could feel the warmth of the California sun, which seemed to massage her swollen limbs. Her bed linens were stark white and smelled of bleach, a scent that reminded her of her days as a nurse and masseuse.”
 3. “Delilah was resourceful. She traveled all over the country, to Chicago; Buffalo, New York; Washington D.C. She worked as a nurse and also worked at Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, where she learned health treatments such as hydrotherapy and massage, particularly massages for those with child.”

Teacher will read one statement and engage the class in a brief discussion on whether that statement is fact or fiction, being sure to have students explain why they believe it to be one or the other. (Consider polling students.) After discussion, teacher will reveal the truth of the statement: fact or fiction. Teacher continues through the designated statements following the same discussion format.

Teacher will review what limited information about Delilah Beasley was known to writer Dana Johnson. To create a successful historical fiction piece, Johnson needed to use imagination and empathy. Writing through the eyes of another means putting yourself in their shoes. (Consider listening to the podcast excerpt a second time.)

Teacher will inform students of historical fiction narrative writing assignment, on the topic that the student researched extensively in the lesson prior.

Teacher will instruct students to take out their reading notes, reference their slideshow/oral presentation material from prior lesson, and their copy of “Our Endless Ongoing” as a model and reference.

Returning to their student groups from the lesson prior, or independently, students will identify 10 facts learned through their research. When 10 facts are selected, they will brainstorm 10 imagined details that might be inferred from the facts.

When students have 10 facts and 10 fiction elements, they may begin outlining and constructing their historical fiction piece.

ASSESSMENT:

Completion of Historical Fiction Narrative Writing Essay.

EXTENSIONS:

- Stage an in-class oral reading.
- Ask students to add an image element to their stories.
- Publish essays in a class zine.
- Use the same material to craft a second essay, this time written as a 1st-person narrative.

Conclusion

This curriculum guide was developed with the loving support and guidance of classroom teachers. Thank you to: Sasha, Jenna, Daniel, and Peta. Thank you also to Dorothy Lazard—librarian, manager of the Oakland History Room, and one of Clockshop’s favorite people.

Above all, thank you to Delilah Leontium Beasley, for her ongoing perseverance and dedication to documenting black history; for seeing the gaps in the ways history was being recorded, and stepping up to record it herself; who’s legacy reminds us to always ask: Who is telling the story?

Trailblazer is part of “Beside the Edge of the World,” an exhibition presented by The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, CA and Clockshop as part of the fourth iteration of its /five initiative. “Beside the Edge of the World” invited three artists and two writers to conduct research into The Huntington’s collections to explore the theme of Utopia.

Clockshop is a multidisciplinary arts organization in Los Angeles. We commission new works by artists and writers, curate inclusive public programs about pressing political and environmental issues, and use collaboration to catalyze large institutions.

Learn more at [Clockshop.org](https://clockshop.org)

Appendix I: Supplementary Material

More on Delilah Beasley

[Introduction PowerPoint](#) about Delilah L. Beasley

Delilah L. Beasley, [The Negro Trail-Blazers of California](#)

Delilah L. Beasley, [Slavery in California](#)

An essay written to challenge the narrative that California and the North did not participate in slavery.

[East Bay Yesterday](#) podcast, Episode 60: “[‘We were being erased’: The Woman who Saved California’s Black History](#)” (32 mins)

This podcast episode introduces Delilah Beasley and features interviews with both Dana Johnson and Ana Cecilia Alvarez. A fantastic summary of Beasley’s life and accomplishments.

More on Oral Histories

[“Reminiscences of Los Angeles” by Belle Buford Thom Collins](#), excerpt (5 mins)

Collins grew up in Los Angeles in the 1880s, and this interview was originally conducted by her niece in 1964. The video combines a recording of the interview with historical photographs.

[Unchained Memories: Readings from Slave Narratives](#) (1 hr 13 mins)

In this documentary about slavery, actors perform slave narratives contained in the archives of the Library of Congress. This links to the full project; shorter clips are also available on YouTube. All narratives should be previewed—many contain racially derogatory language and references to physical and sexual assault.

StoryCorps

StoryCorps is a non-profit organization that collects and preserves oral histories in their online database. There are many examples of high school students interviewing elders and interviews that highlight the “trailblazing” theme. [This](#) is an interview of the brother of the first black astronaut, and [here](#) is an interview between a high school student and her grandmother.

More on Untold Histories

[Code Switch Podcast](#), “[A Strange and Bitter Crop](#)” (October 22, 2019), 26 mins.

Code Switch is a podcast about race in America. This episode is about a Black high school student in Florida who was doing research for a book report when he found newspaper accounts of a horrific lynching that he’d never been told about. That student became a celebrated poet, L. Lamar Wilson. He writes an award-winning poem about the lynching, and then returns to his hometown to create an unconventional memorial to the victim.

This American Life Podcast, “[Little War on the Prairie](#)” (November 23, 2012), 55 mins.

The producer of this episode, John Biewen, talks about how no one ever mentioned the most important event that happened in his hometown: a conflict between Dakota Indians and early Minnesota settlers that ended in thirty-eight Dakota warriors being hanged. Biewen remembers eating at Pizza Hut exactly where the massacre took place and never knowing the story. The podcast is sectioned into a Prologue (4 mins.), Act One (25 mins), and Act Two (26 mins); the Prologue alone is excellent framing for teaching how critical histories can be erased.

California Public Radio KCET’s [Lost LA](#)

This lively series of short documentaries (25-30 min.) uses archival documents to reveal new information about the history of Los Angeles. Although the content is specific to Los Angeles, the series models an approach to history consistent with this curriculum. The second half of “[Before The Dodgers](#)” (Season 1, Episode 2) is especially recommended, telling the story of the displacement of the communities of Chavez Ravine to build Dodger Stadium, as is “[Borderlands](#)” (Season 2, Episode 1), about the history of Indigenous Californians.

More on Historical Fiction

Dana Johnson, “[The Story of Biddy Mason](#)”

Another short story by Trailblazer writer Dana Johnson, which uses both historical research and fiction to tell the story of Biddy Mason. Bridget “Biddy” Mason was a former slave, and became a nurse, landowner, and generous philanthropist. She founded the first African American church in Los Angeles. (More on her bio is [here](#).)

Robin Coste Lewis, “[The Wilde Woman of Aiken](#)”

A poem in which Lewis assumes the point of view of a black woman posing in an old photograph. (A larger version of the photo is [here](#), scroll down.)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Janie Crawford, raised by her grandmother who was born into slavery, learns about herself and societal gender roles through three different relationships. The story is set in the 1910s and 20s, and climaxes with Janie shooting her husband in self-defense.

Julia Alvarez, *In the Time of the Butterflies*

This historical fiction novel takes place during the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic between 1930 and 1960. It tells a fictionalized account of the real-life Mirabal sisters, who became symbols of feminist resistance against the dictatorship.

Octavia Butler, *Kindred*

This is the story of a young Black woman writer named Dana, who finds herself being transported through time between her Los Angeles, California home in 1976 and a pre-Civil War Maryland plantation. This sci-fi novel uses historical research and slave narratives to fuel fantastical storytelling and was recently published as a graphic novel.

Appendix II: Index of Key Terms

The definitions for the following terms were sourced using the Oxford English Dictionary and include some (lightly edited) Wikipedia definitions for people, places and events. The terms are organized by text, and are listed in the order they appear in the reading.

A NOTE ON THE WORD NEGRO: Beginning with its title, Beasley’s book, *The Negro Trail Blazers of California*, uses “Negro” throughout the text. At the time it was written, Negro was the word by which Black people were identified and often identified themselves. That term is now considered outdated, and is closely associated with Jim Crow and racial segregation. During Delilah’s day, the term Negro was a major step up from the derogatory names Black folks were commonly called. Today, some Black people still refer to themselves or others as Negro, as some folks are of an older generation or feel that it connects them to their history. However, while some Black people may still identify with that word, White and non-Black people of color should not use it to refer to Black people.

“Our Endless Ongoing” by Dana Johnson

Ray Noble (1903–1978): an English band leader, composer, arranger, radio comedian, and actor.

hydrotherapy: the use of exercises in a pool as part of treatment for conditions such as arthritis or partial paralysis.

Eden: the place where Adam and Eve lived in the biblical account of the Creation, from which they were expelled for disobediently eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

flora: (*noun*) the plants of a particular region, habitat, or geological period.

beguiled: (*verb*) to charm or enchant (someone), sometimes in a deceptive way; to trick (someone) into doing something; to help (time) pass pleasantly.

solicitous: (*adjective*) characterized by or showing interest or concern.

sustenance: (*noun*) food and drink regarded as a source of strength; the maintaining of someone or something in life or existence.

D. W. Griffith (1875–1948): US movie director. He is responsible for introducing many cinematic techniques, including flashback and fade-out. Griffith is most known for his film *The Birth of a Nation*, which inspired the rebirth of the Klu Klux Klan and was widely protested by activists and black communities across the country.

demitasse: (*noun*) a small coffee cup.

decanter: (*noun*) a stoppered glass container into which wine is decanted.

allotment: (*noun*) the amount of something allocated to a particular person; in the US, a piece of land deeded by the government to a Native American, as part of the division of tribally held land.

indignity: (*noun*) treatment or circumstances that cause one to feel shame or to lose one’s dignity.

pioneer: (*noun*) a person who is among the first to explore or settle a new country or area; a person who is among the first to research and develop a new area of knowledge or activity; a member of an infantry group preparing roads or terrain for the main body of troops. (*verb*) develop or be the first to use or apply (a new method, area of knowledge, or activity); open up (a road or terrain) as a pioneer.

bougainvillea: (*noun*) an ornamental climbing plant that is widely cultivated in the tropics. The flowers are surrounded by brightly colored papery leaf, often in a vivid purple-red color, that last on the plant for a long time.

bespectacled: (*adjective*) of a person wearing eyeglasses.

The Birth of A Nation: a 1915 American silent epic drama film directed by D. W. Griffith. The screenplay is adapted from the novel and play *The Clansman*, by Thomas Dixon Jr. The film portrayed African-Americans (many played by white actors in blackface) as unintelligent and sexually aggressive towards white women and presented the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force. There were widespread black protests against *The Birth of a Nation*. Still, it was a commercial success and became highly influential, even being privately screened for then President Woodrow Wilson and his close friends.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): a US civil rights organization set up in 1909 to oppose racial segregation and discrimination by nonviolent means.

Panama Pacific International Exposition: a world's fair held in San Francisco, California from February 20 to December 4, 1915. Its stated purpose was to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal, but it was widely seen in the city as an opportunity to showcase its recovery from the 1906 earthquake.

animalistic: (*adjective*) characteristic of animals, particularly in being physical and instinctive; relating to or practicing the religious worship of animals.

Panama Canal: a canal about 50 miles (80 km) long, across the Isthmus of Panama, that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Its construction, begun by Ferdinand de Lesseps in 1881, was abandoned in 1889 and was completed by the US, 1904–14. Control of the canal remained with the US until 1999, when it was ceded to Panama.

white supremacy: (*noun*) the belief that white people are superior to those of all other races, especially the black race, and should therefore dominate society.

eugenics: (*noun*) the science of improving a human population by controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable heritable characteristics. Developed largely by Francis Galton as a method of improving the human race, it fell into disfavor only after the perversion of its doctrines by the Nazis.

Race Betterment Foundation: a eugenics and hygiene foundation founded in 1906 by John Harvey Kellogg due to his concerns about race degeneracy.

legitimize: (*verb*) to make something conform to the law or to rules, or to be able to defend with logic or justification.

Trailblazer: (*noun*) a person who makes a new track through wild country; a pioneer or an innovator.

John “Grizzly” Adams (1812-1860): a famous California mountain man and trainer of grizzly bears and other wild animals he captured for menageries, zoological gardens and circuses.

Francis B. Loomis (1861–1948): a journalist, newspaper editor, and civil servant who served as the United States Ambassador to Venezuela from 1897 to 1901, the United States Ambassador to Portugal from 1901 to 1902, and United States Assistant Secretary of State from 1903 to 1905.

The Great War: another name for World War I, a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918.

Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth (1842–1914): a Baptist minister and educator who was born into slavery in Kentucky and escaped during the American Civil War to become a Union soldier. He was appointed as a chaplain in the United States Army and was the first African American to reach the rank of lieutenant colonel.

convalescence: (*noun*) time spent recovering from an illness or medical treatment; recuperation.

W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963): an American sociologist, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor. He was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Du Bois was a prolific author. His collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*, is a seminal work in African-American literature.

“Deeds Ever Lasting” by Ana Cecilia Alvarez

Oakland History Room: a center located on the third floor of the Oakland Public Library Main Branch, which houses archives relating to the history of Oakland and the East Bay.

laurels: (*noun*) the foliage of the bay tree woven into a wreath or crown and worn on the head as an emblem of victory or mark of honor in classical times; honor or praise for an achievement.

prodigious: (*adjective*) remarkably or impressively great in extent, size, or degree.

syndicate: (*verb*) control or manage by a syndicate; publish or broadcast (material) simultaneously in a number of newspapers, television stations, etc; sell (a horse) to a syndicate.

Negro History Week: the precursor to Black History Month, set to the second week of February and created in 1926 in the United States by historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. This week was chosen because it coincided with the birthday of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and of Frederick Douglass on February 14, both of which dates black communities had celebrated together since the late 19th century.

African American Museum and Library at Oakland: a museum and non-circulating library dedicated to preserving African American history, experiences and culture on 14th Street in Downtown Oakland. It contains an extensive archival collection of such artifacts as diaries, correspondence, photos, and periodicals.

Black Panther Party: originally the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, a revolutionary political organization founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in October 1966 in Oakland, California. At its inception, the Black Panther Party’s core practice was its open carry armed citizens’ patrols (“copwatching”) to monitor the behavior of officers of the Oakland Police Department and challenge police brutality in the city. In 1969, a variety of community social programs became a core activity.

James Baldwin: US writer and civil rights activist; full name James Arthur Baldwin. Notable works: novels *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), *Giovanni’s Room* (1956), and *Another Country* (1962); essay collections *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961) and *The Price of a Ticket* (1985).

Fannie Jackson Coppin Club: also known as the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club, was a club for politically active African American women located in Alameda County, California. The club played an important role in community outreach to voters before and after the passage of Proposition 4 in 1911 which granted women in California the right to vote. Many of the women involved in the club were active in the California suffrage movement.

Woman’s Club Movement: a social movement that took place throughout the United States that established the idea that women had a moral duty and responsibility to transform public policy.

While women's organizations had always been a part of United States history, it was not until the Progressive era that it came to be considered a "movement." The first wave of the club movement during the Progressive era was started by white, middle-class, Protestant women and a second phase by African-American women

utopia: (*noun*) an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. The word was first used in the book *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More.

Fugitive Slave laws: laws passed by the United States Congress in 1793 and 1850 to provide for the return of slaves who escaped from one state into another state or territory.

Jim Crow laws: state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States. All were enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by white Democratic-dominated state legislatures after the Reconstruction period. The laws were enforced until 1965.

progenitor: a person or thing from which a person, animal, or plant is descended or originates; an ancestor or parent; a person who originates an artistic, political, or intellectual movement.

pioneer: (*noun*) a person who is among the first to explore or settle a new country or area; a person who is among the first to research and develop a new area of knowledge or activity; a member of an infantry group preparing roads or terrain for the main body of troops. (*verb*) develop or be the first to use or apply (a new method, area of knowledge, or activity); open up (a road or terrain) as a pioneer.

acuity: (*noun*) sharpness or keenness of thought, vision, or hearing.

Mary Ellen Pleasant (1814–1904): a successful 19th-century African American entrepreneur, financier, real estate magnate, and abolitionist.

Biddy Mason (1818–1891): an African-American nurse and a Californian real estate entrepreneur and philanthropist. She is the founder of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, California. Born a slave, she developed a variety of skills and developed knowledge of medicine, child care, and livestock care. In California, she successfully petitioned a court for her freedom.

Archy Lee (1840–1873): an African-American born into slavery in Mississippi who escaped from slavery and won his freedom in California in 1848. His case was the first to use California's status as a free state to declare that escaped slaves in California were hence considered freemen and should not be returned to their owners.

Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth (1842–1914): a Baptist minister and educator who was born into slavery in Kentucky and escaped during the American Civil War to become a Union soldier. He was appointed as a chaplain in the United States Army and was the first African American to reach the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Pony Express: a system of mail delivery operating from 1860 to 1861 over a distance of 1,800 miles between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, using continuous relays of horse riders.

amnesia: (*noun*) a partial or total loss of memory.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): a US civil rights organization set up in 1909 to oppose racial segregation and discrimination by nonviolent means.

Roland Hayes (1887–1977): an American lyric tenor and composer. Critics lauded his abilities and linguistic skills demonstrated with songs in French, German and Italian. Earlier African-American concert artists were not recorded because in their day recording companies were only interested in a vaudeville type of singer. Hayes was the first to break this barrier and in 1939 he recorded with Columbia.

tack: (*noun*) a small, sharp broad-headed nail; a long stitch used to fasten fabrics together temporarily, prior to permanent sewing; a method of dealing with a situation or problem; a course of action or policy; the quality of being sticky.

The Birth of A Nation: a 1915 American silent epic drama film directed by D. W. Griffith. The screenplay is adapted from the novel and play *The Clansman*, by Thomas Dixon Jr. The film portrayed African-Americans (many played by white actors in blackface) as unintelligent and sexually aggressive towards white women and presented the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force. There were widespread black protests against *The Birth of a Nation*. Still, it was a commercial success and became highly influential, even being privately screened for then President Woodrow Wilson and his close friends.

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Booker T. Washington (1856–1915): US educator. A leading commentator for black Americans, he established the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (1881). His support for segregation and his emphasis on vocational skills for blacks were criticized by other black leaders.

ensorship: (*noun*) the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.

lynching: a premeditated extrajudicial killing by a group. It is most often used to characterize informal public executions by a mob in order to punish an alleged transgressor or intimidate a group. In the United States, lynchings of African Americans became frequent in the South during the period after the Reconstruction era and they continued to be carried out into the 20th century.

Negro History Movement: an intellectual movement in the early twentieth century, largely led by Carter G. Woodson, whose aim was to expand the study of black history in schools, advocate for African-American rights, and improve race relations.

autodidacticism: (*noun*) education without the guidance of masters (such as teachers and professors) or institutions (such as schools).

sanction: (*verb*) give official permission or approval for (an action); impose a sanction or penalty on.

mimeograph: (*verb*) make a copy of (a document) with a duplicating machine which produces copies from a stencil, now superseded by the photocopier.