



Black History Month: About the Holiday



Black History Month honors the achievements, courage, and contributions of Black Americans throughout U.S. history. It began as Negro History Week, started by historian Carter G. Woodson in 1926. Every February, schools and families learn about leaders, inventors, artists, athletes, and everyday heroes.

Black History Month is observed every February in the United States. It grew out of Negro History Week, first held in February 1926.

- Carter G. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915.
- In 1926, Woodson's group launched Negro History Week during the second week of February.
- February was chosen because it holds the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.
- In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month.
- Canada also observes Black History Month in February, while the United Kingdom observes it in October.
- Harriet Tubman escaped slavery and then guided others to freedom on the Underground Railroad.
- Frederick Douglass escaped slavery and became a famous speaker, writer, and abolitionist.
- Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955.
- Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963.
- In 1967, Thurgood Marshall became the first African American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- In 1992, Dr. Mae Jemison became the first African American woman to travel into space.