



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month is celebrated in the UK every October.

At Thomas Alleyne's, we see this month as an opportunity for celebration, acknowledgement and recognition. We will celebrate the incredible contributions Black people have made throughout history, providing our students with inspirational role models in all areas of our curriculum, but we must also acknowledge the barriers these individuals had to overcome to achieve their success, and the barriers that still exist for Black people in the UK today. We encourage our students to recognise the role we all have to play in the fight for equality.

Black History Month can often be accused of being tokenistic in schools in the UK. We have worked hard to ensure that the conversations we have in October will be revisited throughout the year in our diverse curriculum that challenges stereotypes and promotes diverse role models all year round.

We have a range of events for our students this month including;

- Assemblies on the topic of Racial Wellness led by Rianna Wilson from BLAM UK (pictured below), a charity that works with young Black people and schools across the country
- Tutor time activities and discussions focusing on Claudia Jones and the origins of the Notting Hill Carnival
- A book a day – Introducing a range of books by Black authors in tutor time
- Cooking with Ghanaian chef Patti Sloley
- Lessons with Black themes and discussions incorporated into them

As well as all of this, we will be launching a competition for students, and their families, to get involved in. Students will be asked to create a homage to a Black person that has made a significant difference in the UK. This homage can be a painting, a sculpture, a poem... anything creative, so get thinking!



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Want to learn more about race and racism in the UK?

Black History Month provides the perfect opportunity to learn more about issues of racism, and understanding race in general. Here is a quick glossary of some terms that you may find useful in understanding;

Ally – An individual that supports Black people, even if they themselves are not Black. A true ally stands up and speaks out for Black people, even if they are not in the room.

Anti-racism – More than just not being racist, Anti-racism refers to the action of actively seeking out racism and fighting to prevent it.

Cultural Appropriation – The use of somebody else’s culture for your own gain, without recognition of the value of that thing in its original culture.

Ethnicity – This term refers to a specific cultural heritage. For example, Black British, or Caribbean

Global Majority – An alternative term to use instead of People of Colour (POC). Global Majority refers to the fact that around the world, more people are non-white than white. It is used in opposition to the phrase “minority” which can communicate powerlessness and insignificance.

Implicit (or unconscious) Bias – Negative associations/stereotypes that people may unknowingly hold, which may impact their decisions/actions towards those groups.

Intersectionality – This term refers to the way in which some people may be advantaged/disadvantaged by virtue of a range of different characteristics. For example, a Black woman may experience both racism and sexism in her life, whereas a Black man may experience racism, but not sexism.

Microaggressions – Indirect discrimination that may not be obvious to all as racist. For example, using nicknames instead of learning somebody’s name of a different culture

People of Colour – While not universally agreed, this term is used to describe people who are not white. For some people, this is their preferred term of reference, for others it is not. It is always best (and polite) to check first!

Race – This term refers specifically to the colour of someone’s skin (e.g. black or white)

White Fragility – A term coined to describe the discomfort felt by some white people when having conversations about race. This can sometimes lead to those people choosing not to discuss race, and may hinder efforts to address racism.

As well as learning these terms to help with conversations about race, there are some fantastic books out there that share lived experiences and have really helped me to further understand some of these issues. A few that I would recommend are detailed below. Please also see the attachment to this newsletter for more titles.

Brit(ish) by Afua Hirsch

Natives by Akala

Why I’m No Longer Talking To White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge

People like Us by Hashi Mohamed

Mr Cox

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead