

Lesson Plan



BHM100 Project	☒ A. Studying the Origins of Black History Month by Mining Black Archives ☐ B. Building a Calendar for Black Histories of the Everyday ☐ C. Using Black History as an Intellectual Resource for the Present ☐ D. Preserving Local Stories through Oral History
Grade Level / Course	AP African American Studies
AP Course Alignment	Relevant Skills [1A-D, 2A-D, 3A-E], Relevant Topics [1.1, 1.6, 3.7, 3.15, 4.7, 4.21]
Time	60 minutes

Overview	Content
Project Description (Briefly describe what students will explore and produce in this lesson.)	Studying Black history critically means not only becoming acquainted with the stories that form historical narratives but also thinking about how those narratives were constructed as well as the sources used for their creation. It means thinking about how racial inequities and power have shaped the process of producing historical narratives.
Learning Objectives	1. Analyze the role of archives in shaping historical knowledge, with particular attention to how limitations in archival materials have affected the study of Black history. 2. Explain how Black “memory workers” have identified, preserved, and interpreted archival materials to produce more accurate and representative accounts of the Black past. 3. Interpret digitized archival sources to investigate the early development and evolution of Negro History Week. 4. Evaluate the contributions of African American teachers, students, and school communities in expanding and sustaining Negro History Week and transforming it into Black History Month.
Essential Guiding Question(s)	A. What is an archive? B. How do archives influence the production of history? C. What challenges have archives posed to the study of Black history in the past?
Required Materials	• [Required Pre-Reading] <i>I’ll Make Me a World</i> by Jarvis R. Givens, Introduction; Part I (Negro History Week & discussion of Black memory work); Part III (Pennington & Trouillot excerpts, discussion of historical silences, memory work & origins of BTA), pages 1-28, 43-46, 58-60, 66-68, 137-139, 144-146, 149-153, 153-160. • AP African American Studies Project A Handout: Tab 2 • AP African American Studies Project A Slides • BHM100 Educator Submission Airtable Form (optional)
<u>SEL</u> Component	As students examine archives and historical silences, they are encouraged to reflect on how history impacts their sense of identity, belonging, and responsibility to preserve stories in their own communities.
Additional Resources for Discussion	• Interview with Professor Marisa Fuentes about Archives and Enslaved Women • Article about pioneering Black archivist Dorothy Porter (1905-1995)

Additional Primary Sources on Negro History Week	- Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Negro History Week Pamphlet. 1935. - Woodson, Carter G. "Negro History Week: The Tenth Year." <i>Journal of Negro History</i> 19, no. 2 (April 1935): pg. 111–117. <i>Afro-American Newspaper</i> Negro History Week and Black History Month materials.
Essential Knowledge Additional Resources	- African Free Schools, New York Historical Society: The New York African Free School Collection - Arturo A. Schomburg: "The Negro Digs Up His Past" by Arturo A. Schomburg, in The New Negro: An Interpretation edited by Alain Locke, 1925 [AP Required Source 3.15] - Carter G. Woodson, The Mis-Education of the Negro, 1933 - W.E.B. Du Bois, <i>Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880</i>. 1935. - Zora Neale Hurston, Crash Course Black American History: Zora Neale Hurston
Note to Teachers	<i>Teachers and students are encouraged to identify local sources—e.g., newspapers, yearbooks, student newspapers—that might feature early Negro History Week or Black History Month celebrations.</i>

Section	Time	Flow
Pre-Class Note (prep)	N/A	<u>Purpose:</u> Identify what students and the teacher need to do, read, or prep prior to lesson. <u>Planning Question:</u> What do I and my students need to prepare in advance so class time can be focused on inquiry, discussion, and creation rather than setup or background delivery?
		This lesson assumes students have completed the required pre-reading of <i>I'll Make Me a World</i> by Jarvis R. Givens: Introduction Part I: Negro History Week and early discussions of Black memory work Part III: Excerpts by Pennington and Trouillot; discussions of historical silences, memory work, and the origins of the Black Teacher Archive <i>Relevant pages:</i> 1–28; 43–46; 58–60; 66–68; 137–139; 144–146; 149–153; 153–160 It is recommended that teachers cover Topic 3.15: Black History Education and African American Studies before or in tandem with this lesson, as there are clear connections to Carter G. Woodson, the archiving and dissemination of Black history, and the broader goals of the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to their instructional context; any of the listed Relevant Topics may be used. <u>Learning Objective 3.15.B:</u> Describe the development and aims of the Black intellectual tradition that predates the formal integration of African American Studies into American colleges and universities in the mid-twentieth century. EK 3.15.B.1 The Black intellectual tradition in the United States began two centuries before the formal introduction of the field of African American Studies in the late 1960s. It emerged through the work of Black activists, educators, writers, and archivists who documented Black experiences. EK 3.15.B.2 Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the African Free School provided an education to the children of enslaved and free Black people in New York. The school helped prepare early Black abolitionists for leadership. EK 3.15.B.3 The Black Puerto Rican bibliophile Arturo Schomburg's collection, donated to The New York Public Library, became the basis of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. EK 3.15.B.4 The sociologist and activist W.E.B. Du Bois's research and writings produced some of the earliest sociological surveys of African Americans. EK 3.15.B.5 Anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston's writings documented forms of African American culture and linguistic expression.

Section	Time	Flow
		EK 3.15.B.6 The historian Carter Godwin Woodson founded what became Black History Month, in addition to publishing many works chronicling Black experiences and perspectives in history.
1. Opening / Framing	10 mins	<u>Purpose:</u> Activate prior knowledge and introduce the central question(s) of the project. <u>Planning Question:</u> How will I connect this lesson to students' prior knowledge and lived experiences while clearly introducing the central question or purpose of the project?
		As students enter the classroom, they will watch a short introductory video from Dr. Jarvis Givens that introduces Project A and its central focus on archives, power, and Black history. Following the video, teachers will introduce students to two short excerpts (on page 1 of their handout) by James W. C. Pennington and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, which will be used to frame a brief discussion or mini-lecture on antiblackness, power, and the creation of historical sources and archives. Both excerpts appear in <i>I'll Make Me a World</i>, Part III (pp. 139, 144–146). “No where does he [the enslaved] find any record of himself as a man. On looking at the family record of his old, kind, Christian, master, there he finds his name on a catalogue with the horses, cows, hogs and dogs. However humiliating and degrading it may be to his feelings to find his name written down among the beasts of the field, that is just the place, and the only place assigned to it by the chattel relation.” - James W. C. Pennington (1849), <i>The Fugitive Blacksmith</i> Silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance). - Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), <i>Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History</i> Teachers are encouraged to use a Close Reading protocol to support student engagement with the excerpts, allowing students to annotate and reflect at their own pace. After the close reading, facilitate a whole-class discussion using the following guiding questions: 1. What do the passages explicitly state? 2. What do the passages suggest or imply about power and historical knowledge? 3. How do these ideas connect to broader themes you have studied in this course? This discussion will provide students with a conceptual framework for understanding how archives are created, whose stories are preserved, and how historical silences shape narratives about the Black past.
2. Model/Mini-Lesson	10 mins	<u>Purpose:</u> Provide historical context and model how to work with sources. <u>Planning Question:</u> What key historical context, concepts, or skills do students need to see modeled so they understand how to engage thoughtfully with the sources or task?

Section	Time	Flow
		Students will watch the Black Teacher Archive Trailer (0:00-2:13) and answering the following Guiding Questions: • What is an archive? • How is the Black Teacher Archive contributing to African American History? • How is this story of the Black Teacher Archive and the history of Black education connected to this year's 100th anniversary of Black History Month/Negro History Week? After viewing the video and answering the questions, have students participate in a Turn and Talk with a partner to share and compare their responses to the guiding questions. Bring the class back together for a brief whole-group discussion, inviting a few students to share key ideas or insights that emerged from their partner conversations.
3. Student Inquiry & Analysis	20 mins	Purpose: Students interpret what they've learned and begin producing original work. Planning Question: How will students make meaning from their learning by synthesizing ideas and producing original work that reflects understanding, voice, and interpretation?
		The teacher will model accessing the Black Teacher Archive online portal to the students, who will be given the link and encouraged to browse on their own in the next activity. Alternatively, students can be given a quick task to familiarize themselves with the archive if time permits. Next, students will be given the link to search for "Negro History Week" references in the Black Teacher Archive in order to: • Explore the collection of references to Negro History Week. • Identify 2-3 items/mentions from the collection that interest them, describing and analyzing the content of the articles.
4. Synthesis / Creation	15 mins	Purpose: Students engage directly with sources or project materials. Planning Question: How will students actively investigate, question, and analyze sources or materials in ways that center Black histories, perspectives, and evidence-based thinking?
		Students will write a short response to the following questions using the articles they found on the Black Teacher Archive on page 4 of their handout: • How was Negro History Week observed or encouraged in Black segregated schools and communities? • What role did teachers play in helping sustain and expand the tradition of Negro History Week before it developed into Black History Month in 1976?
4. Closing & Reflection	5 mins	Purpose: Reinforce learning and surface student-led insights. Planning Question: How will I help students reflect on what they learned and did, why it matters, and how it connects to their lived experiences, broader Black histories, or present-day questions?
		As class time winds down, introduce the homework assignment. Students will respond in writing to the following questions on page 5 of their handout: 1. What challenges have scholars identified in the creation of archives and Black historical narratives? 2. Why is it important to continue seeking out and preserving archives about Black life despite these challenges? 3. How have Black memory workers organized to build and sustain archives and historical collections about Black life? To conclude the lesson, collect brief student reflections on their learning. Students may respond using sticky notes or by completing page 4 of the handout, using the prompts below:

Section	Time	Flow
		• What is the most important thing you learned today? • What is the most surprising thing you learned today? Once students have finished, they can place their responses in a designated area of the classroom. Teachers may also add optional prompts to gather feedback on the lesson itself. Alternatively, this reflection can be completed digitally using a collaborative tool such as Padlet.
Extension/ Homework	N/A	<u>Purpose:</u> Extend learning through reflection, research, or creation. <u>Planning Question:</u> How can students deepen or apply their learning outside of class?
		Students will respond in writing to the following questions on page 5 of their handout: 1. What challenges have scholars identified in the creation of archives and Black historical narratives? 2. Why is it important to continue seeking out and preserving archives about Black life despite these challenges? 3. How have Black memory workers organized to build and sustain archives and historical collections about Black life?

Handout



Project A. Unearthing the Black Past:

Studying the Origins of Black History Month

Black history has not always been preserved or valued in traditional archives. Black educators, scholars, and communities, often called **Black memory workers**, have played a critical role in collecting, protecting, and teaching Black history despite systemic barriers. In this lesson, you will explore how archives shape what we know about the past and how Negro History Week grew into Black History Month.

Part 1: Interpreting Historical Ideas

Read and discuss the following ideas from Black scholars:

“No where does he [the enslaved] find any record of himself as a man. On looking at the family record of his old, kind, Christian, master, there he finds his name on a catalogue with the horses, cows, hogs and dogs. However humiliating and degrading it may be to his feelings to find his name written down among the beasts of the field, that is just the place, and the only place assigned to it by the chattel relation.”

- James W. C. Pennington (1849), *The Fugitive Blacksmith*

Silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance).

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

Reflection on the passages below.

- a. What do the passages explicitly state?
- b. What do the passages suggest or imply about power and historical knowledge?
- c. How do these ideas connect to broader themes you have studied in this course?



Part 2: Framing

After watching the [Black Teacher Archive Trailer](#), respond briefly in complete sentences.

1. What is an archive?

2. How does the Black Teacher Archive contribute to African American history?

3. How is the story of the Black Teacher Archive and the history of Black education connected to the 100th anniversary of Negro History Week / Black History Month?



Part 3: Exploring the Black Teacher Archive

You will examine digitized sources related to **Negro History Week**.

Instructions:

1. Visit the [Black Teacher Archive](#).
2. Search for references to “Negro History Week.”
3. Select **2–3 items** that interest you.

For **each item**, answer:

- A. What type of source is this (article, announcement, lesson, etc.)?
- B. What does it show about how Negro History Week was celebrated or promoted?
- C. Who created it, and who was the intended audience?

Archival Item	A. What type of source is this (article, announcement, lesson, etc.)?	B. What does it show about how Negro History Week was celebrated or promoted?	C. Who created it, and who was the intended audience?
1.			
2.			
3.			



Part 4: Short Written Response

Answer both questions below using evidence from the sources you examined.

1. How was Negro History Week observed or encouraged in Black segregated schools and communities?

2. What role did teachers play in helping sustain and expand the tradition of Negro History Week before it developed into Black History Month in 1976?

Part 5: Close-Out

1. What is the most important thing you learned today?

2. What is the most surprising thing you learned today?



Part 6: Homework/Extension

Based on what you have learned today during class, answer the following questions.

1. What challenges have scholars identified when it comes to archives and the creation of Black historical narratives?

2. Why is it important to continue seeking out and preserving archives about Black life despite these challenges?

3. How have Black memory workers organized to build and preserve archives and historical collections about Black life?
