

# *The Historic Journey*

“YES WE CAN”



The African American  
Experience in American History

## Teacher Activity Guide



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## The African American Experience in American History

### Teacher Activity Guide

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***The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can"***

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#### Teacher's Activity Guide

***The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can"***

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and countless other advisors  
who helped translate a vision into a tangible instrument  
that will touch many lives

---



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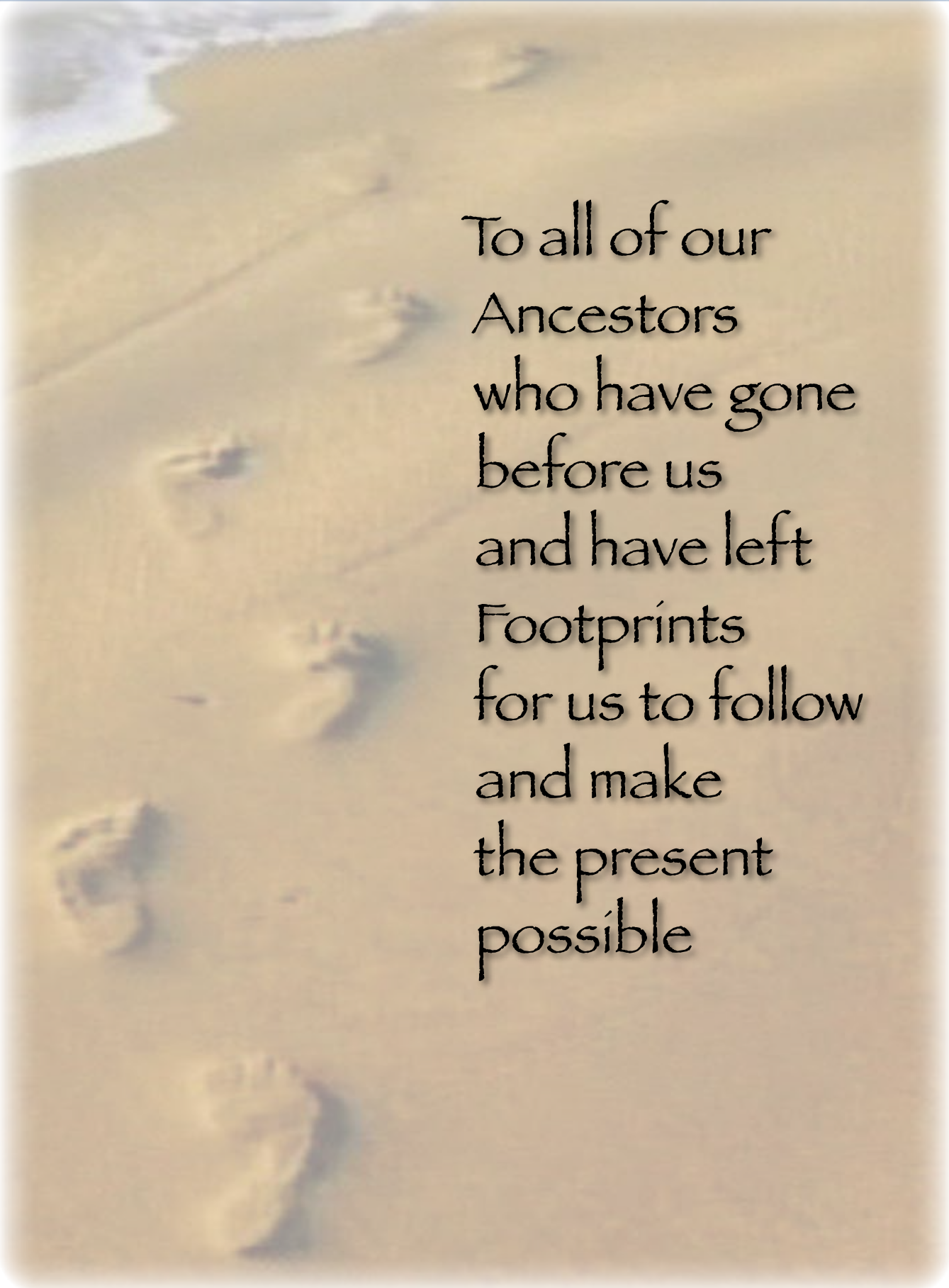
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## DEDICATION



To all of our  
Ancestors  
who have gone  
before us  
and have left  
Footprints  
for us to follow  
and make  
the present  
possible

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*Photo courtesy of Bossip*



*Booker T. Washington President of Tuskegee University*



*An academic class solving brick masonry problems at Tuskegee in early 1900's*

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# FORWARD

Throughout its more than 200 year history, the United States of America has been able to maintain what it terms, “*a smooth transition of power.*” This means that whenever the national leadership changes, it changes without violence, military rule, or martial law. Americans go to the polls, choose their candidates, and allow the political process to tell them the winner. This does not mean that people are not sometimes upset with the results. It does not mean that people do not cry foul if they think their candidate did not get a fair chance. But it does mean that for the most part, Americans respect the process and allow it to run its course in electoral decisions.

In November 2008 one of the nation’s most remarkable elections took place. Against all odds, a freshman U.S. Senator from Illinois, Barack Hussein Obama became the 44th President of the United States. This is a remarkable and historic accomplishment because at the founding of the nation someone with Barack Obama’s credential could have never been elected president. Indeed, someone with his background could not even vote when the nation was founded. Senator Obama did what many thought impossible—a man of African descent became president of the most powerful nation in the world. It is not surprising that some Indiana schools have decided to commemorate this amazing event with a curriculum guide. However this guide is about much more than the election of an African descent president. It is about the United States as a nation of possibilities.

The beauty of this curriculum is that it uses the election of President Barack Obama not as an ending point, but as a beginning place for engaging so many students who have typically been disenfranchised by school. Instead of expecting students to sit through 179 days of instruction about what “*other*” people have done, this curriculum starts with the excitement and hope of a new kind of president with a new kind of agenda.

As I read this curriculum, I was reminded of a statement I made many years ago about how to go about teaching history to engage all students. I pointed out that if I were still teaching US History I would not start with “*the Age of Exploration*” and move people through the Colonial Period, the American Revolution, and the Constitutional Convention. Instead, I would begin with the story of sharecropper turned civil rights leader, Fannie Lou Hamer. I would use her story as an example of the power and beauty of the Constitution because if the Constitution works for Mrs. Hamer—a poor, Black, woman—then it does indeed work. After exploring Mrs. Hamer’s story we might ask the question, “*What is it about this country and its founding documents that allows ‘the least of these’ to succeed?*” Answers to those questions would prompt us to go back to look at the exploration and founding but our eyes would never waver too far away from Mrs. Hamer.

In this curriculum educators and students can look at the incredible rise of Barack Obama and how his diverse and multi-textured history has come to define us as a nation. To understand how we elected our new president, we have to understand the relationship between the US and the continent of Africa. We have to understand how geography, politics, culture, economics, and sociology helped shaped both President Obama as an individual and us as a nation. This curriculum regards Barack Obama as the embodiment of multiculturalism, democratic reform, and change. These are three qualities that the nation has nurtured and cultivated and even though they are idealized qualities, not yet realized, they are significant foundational qualities just the same.

An additional quality of this curriculum is that it uses the agreed upon standards of the state and local district to build a rigorous, relevant, rich set of learning experiences for all students. Rather than the stripped down, didactic teach to the test materials that have pervaded urban classrooms over the past few years, this curriculum demonstrates that there need not be a split

*continued on next page*

between high interest and achievement. When we argue that we want students to develop critical thinking skills, we must recognize that they have to think critically about something. By considering the life and presidency of Barack Obama, students are encouraged to ask the critical question —“*How is it that someone with a modest background and a seeming racial disadvantage can rise to assume the nation’s highest office?*”

Students also are prompted to ask a critical question about their own futures. “*If Barack Obama can become president, what are my prospects for success in my chosen field?*” Such a question can help students as they trace their own histories, patterns of migration, cultural traditions, and political experiences. This curriculum guide does a wonderful job of placing President Barack Obama’s rise to the presidency in the context of hard work, struggle, and cultural pride that preceded him. In

this curriculum we see the work of people like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. DuBois, Granville T. Woods, and others so that our students recognize that President Obama, while exceptional, is not unique. African American excellence and ingenuity is threaded throughout US History. Our students must study this history to gain a proper perspective on the way African Americans and other people have contributed to the development and prosperity of this nation.

The theme of President Obama’s election was “*Yes, We Can*” and the theme of this curriculum is “*Yes, we did, yes we can, and yes we will!*” I am excited to see some Indiana school systems move in this direction and hope it will be the catalyst for similar change in school districts across the nation. I applaud those districts for their courage and their integrity. This is a masterpiece!

**Gloria Ladson-Billings**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

# *The Historic Journey*

"YES WE CAN"

With deep honor and humility, I present "*The Historic Journey, Yes We Can!*" –Vibrant lessons of instruction which illuminate the African and African American experience in America and the world. Through comprehensive teaching guides and stimulating instructional lessons constructed by master classroom teachers and educational consultants throughout this nation, some of the richest African and African American contributions to America and humanity are presented in "*The Historic Journey, Yes We Can!*" classroom teaching guide.

The inspiration for this project came after a request from Dr. Tom Benjamin, Jr. a pastor in Indianapolis, who wanted a video presentation shown to his congregation that would capture a moment in time when the United States of America elected its first African American president.

As I began working on this project, I felt the presence of the Divine Creator and the spirits of our ancestors who watched as I brought their stories to life again. Their stories would be shared with people of all ages who may have lived through earlier turbulent times when we were not even allowed to vote and others who may be unfamiliar with the larger historical narratives that led to Barack Hussein Obama becoming President of the United States of America.

The reaction of people who viewed the video was overwhelmingly positive and totally unexpected. Equally unexpected was the fact that educators from across the country, who saw the DVD at the National Council on Educating Black Children and the National Alliance of Black School Educators, asked that a simple activity guide be created to accompany the video. Since that time,

the collective efforts of many caring and supportive members of the community has grown into a comprehensive teacher's curriculum framework guide and interactive website. Both mediums trace the footsteps of ancient Africans, who constructed the steps of pyramids, to the time when enslaved Africans, with shackled ankles, left their footprints along the African coastline, until today when one of their descendants ascended the steps of the White House as President. This curriculum resource provides insight into the video clips and its footage which explores the story of African Americans in the history of the United States.

This historical journey and the subsequent victory that President Obama lives is not his own; countless others came before him and paid a price for his success and because of him, many young people believe that they can do things they never dreamed of before. The nation owes a debt of gratitude to both the known and unsung heroes of the past who risked or gave up their lives to bring newly founded justice to our nation. Some may think the story has come to an end and that President Obama's election means we no longer need to address the moral dilemma of the silent and subtle racism that our nation still faces. As such, this DVD and Guide of *The Historic Journey, "Yes We Can"* provides a bridge for people from all ethnicities to begin to openly dialogue about mutual concerns that will make us all better people and citizens. It is my energized hope that educators, students and American communities will become knowledgeable of and enlightened by the historic journey of a people from the shores of Africa to the Americas that led to the election of the first African American President of the United States of America.

**Garry D. Holland**

*President, Holland & Associates, LLC*

## INTRODUCTION

# Biography of President Barack Obama

Barack H. Obama is the 44th President of the United States of America. His story is the American story — values from the heartland, a middle-class upbringing in a strong family, hard work and education as the means of getting ahead, and the conviction that a life so blessed should be lived in service to others.

With a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas, President Obama was born in Hawaii on August 4, 1961. He was raised with help from his grandfather, who served in General Patton's army, and his grandmother, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle management at a bank.

President Obama attended Occidental College in Los Angeles and Columbia University in New York City. After working his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans, President Obama moved to Chicago, where he worked with a group of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants.

He went on to attend law school, where he became the first African American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. Upon graduation, he returned to Chicago to help lead a voter registration drive, teach constitutional law at



the University of Chicago, and remain active in his community.

Obama's years of public service are based on his unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around a politics of purpose. In the Illinois State Senate, he passed the first major ethics reform bill in 25 years, cut taxes for working families, and expanded health care for children and their parents.

As a United States Senator, he reached across the aisle and worked with Republicans to pass ground breaking lobbying reform, supported measures to secure the world's most dangerous nuclear weapons, and he helped to bring transparency to government spending by putting federal spending online.

He was elected the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008, and sworn into office on January 20, 2009. At that time, President Obama and his wife, Michelle, were the proud parents of two daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7.

### RESOURCE:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama/>

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/obama-jr-barack-1961>



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY  
February 2011

## A PROCLAMATION

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION  
National African American History Month 2011

The great abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass once told us, *"If there is no struggle, there is no progress."* Progress in America has not come easily, but has resulted from the collective efforts of generations. For centuries, African American men and women have persevered to enrich our national life and bend the arc of history toward justice. From resolute Revolutionary War soldiers fighting for liberty to the hardworking students of today reaching for horizons their ancestors could only have imagined, African Americans have strengthened our Nation by leading reforms, overcoming obstacles, and breaking down barriers. During National African American History Month, we celebrate the vast contributions of African Americans to our Nation's history and identity.

This year's theme, *"African Americans and the Civil War,"* invites us to reflect on 150 years since the start of the Civil War and on the patriots of a young country who fought for the promises of justice and equality laid out by our forbearers. In the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln not only extended freedom to those still enslaved within rebellious areas, he also opened the door for African Americans to join the Union effort.

Tens of thousands of African Americans enlisted in the United States Army and Navy, making extraordinary sacrifices to help unite a fractured country and free millions from slavery. These gallant soldiers, like those in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, served with distinction, braving both intolerance and the perils of war to inspire a Nation and expand the domain of freedom. Beyond the battlefield, black men and women also supported the war effort by serving as surgeons, nurses, chaplains, spies, and in other essential roles. These brave Americans gave their energy, their spirit, and sometimes their lives for the noble cause of liberty.

Over the course of the next century, the United States struggled to deliver fundamental civil and human rights to African Americans, but African Americans would not let their dreams be denied. Though Jim Crow segregation slowed the onward march of history and expansion of the American dream, African Americans braved bigotry and violence to organize schools, churches, and neighborhood organizations. Bolstered by strong values of faith and community, black men and women have launched businesses, fueled scientific advances, served our Nation in the Armed Forces, sought public office, taught our children, and created groundbreaking works of art and entertainment. To perfect our Union and provide a better life for their children, tenacious civil rights pioneers have long demanded that America live up to its founding principles, and their efforts continue to inspire us.

Though we inherit the extraordinary progress won by the tears and toil of our predecessors, we know barriers still remain on the road to equal opportunity. Knowledge is our strongest tool against injustice, and it is our responsibility to empower every child in America with a world-class education from cradle to career. We must continue to build on our Nation's foundation of freedom and ensure equal opportunity, economic security, and civil rights for all Americans. After a historic recession has devastated many American families, and particularly African Americans, we must continue to create jobs, support our middle class, and strengthen pathways for families to climb out of poverty.

During National African American History Month, we recognize the extraordinary achievements of African Americans and their essential role in shaping the story of America. In honor of their courage and contributions, let us resolve to carry forward together the promise of America for our children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2011 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

# General Timeline of Events Covered In the DVD

Events presented in, *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can: The African American Experience in American History,"* reflect significant moments in the African American story. Through images set to the music, "*Never Could Have Made It*" written by Marvin Sapp, the DVD provides a brief glimpse as to how the past and the present are connected. The following themes are explored in the video:

- **Footprints on the Sands** – representing the Laetoli Footprints of Africa
- **Slave Ship Crossing the Atlantic Ocean The Middle Passage and Captivity**
- African American images of people and events associated in the struggle for freedom

Sojourner Truth	Nat Turner
Frederick Douglass	Harriet Tubman
Marcus Garvey	Ida B. Wells
Emmett Till	Malcolm X
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	
Rosa Parks	

- **Freedom Marches Selma, Alabama**  
"I Have a Dream Speech" in Washington, D. C. – (1963)
- **Images in the Life of Barack Obama:**  
Family  
Graduation  
Teaching  
Senator
- **Connections**  
The Kennedys and Dr. M. L. King, Jr.,  
The Past, Slavery,  
The Civil Rights Era



- **The Campaign** – Challenges, Prayer, Speeches, Debates; Voting Rights in the Past and Present

- List of those who have contributed to the African American journey (*found at end of DVD*):

Sojourner Truth	Denmark Vesey
Malcolm X	Crispus Attucks
Langston Hughes	James Weldon Johnson
Marcus Garvey	Elijah Muhammad
W. E. B. DuBois	Carter G. Woodson
Booker T. Washington	Madame C. J. Walker
Rosa Parks	James Farmer
Stokely Carmichael	Ida B. Wells
Frederick Douglass	Freedom Riders
Viola Luizzo	Medgar Evers
Tom Benjamin	Fannie Lou Hamer
H. Rap Brown	Adam Clayton Powell
Jackie Robinson	Huey P. Newton
Julia Carson	A. Phillip Randolph
Coretta Scott King	Thurgood Marshall
Mickey Schwerner	Andrew Goodman
James Chaney	Dr. Charles Drew
Benjamin Banneker	John Henry Clark
Ernest Everett Just	Daisy Bates
Marian Anderson	Gabriel Prosser
Dorothy Height	

- **Election Night** – The Announcement and World Wide Reactions
- **Parallels in the Lives of Barack Obama and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**
- **Inauguration Day** – January 20, 2009
- **Selection for the Nobel Peace Prize**
- **Footprints on the Sands**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

# How to Use this Teacher's Guide

This document includes a collection of lesson plans developed for teachers of various grade levels by educators with a committed desire to make a difference in the lives of all children. The lessons are designed for use with the DVD entitled *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can."* While some lessons may be more appropriate for various grade levels, they can all be adapted and used in modified forms for numerous grade levels.

With the same spirit that brought about the momentous election of the first African American President of the United States of America, the combined efforts of these writers are offered to teachers across the nation to help students grasp the significance behind the historic election of President Barack Obama.

The DVD contains images and excerpts of video footage with recurring themes that address an African American experience that began with millions of men and women being forcibly transplanted from their African homeland into a hostile culture of enslavement. It ends with the reality of an African American man being elected to the office of president of one of the most powerful nations in the world.

After centuries of advocating for change, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, led to many visible changes as numerous laws and court decisions emerged. This media presentation chronicles the experience of the visible celebration of people in America and around the world as the promises of

hope met a moment in time when past memories were shelved as our nation elected an African American president.

In the first overview lesson, teachers will find some general information and lessons that tie in with the video. However, more in-depth lessons are provided that look at various aspects of the African American journey. The lessons give teachers a reference document that serves as a springboard for a more thorough study of the African American experience. This document presents an overview that provides a small slice of a massive story about issues and concerns that are still educationally relevant today. Furthermore, examining the historical narrative that led an African American man to the White House is noteworthy.

Be sure to go to the Website for additional information to support teaching the lessons included in this guide.

Each lesson has been correlated to the Indiana State Academic Standards for Social Studies and Language Arts. Indicator numbers are included with each lesson. The complete wording for each indicator connected to the lessons is located in the Appendix section of this document. The Indiana State Standards can be found at <http://www.indianastandards.org/>. The National Center for Social Studies standards can be found at <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards>. Indiana standards can be correlated to the National Standards. In addition, the Common Core standards for Math and Language Arts are referenced.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

# Why Study African American History?

America's families have come from many places in the world, and America's complete account of history must include all of their stories. In the past, many people who wrote about history did not tell the whole story about all of America's citizens. Many important facts, events and stories were left out. In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, a teacher and author, decided that more people needed to know about Black people in America. Woodson is called the "*Father of Black History*." He thought it was important to know, honor, and celebrate the history of what Black people had done in the past and are doing today.

Many believe that Woodson chose February to celebrate Black History Week because President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass were born during that month. Both men are important in African American history. In the 1960s, the celebration changed to Black History Month. Now, some may call this observation African American History Month. While this time of celebration is a good place to begin studying African American achievements, it is important to remember the accomplishments of African Americans throughout the year.

Long ago, African Americans faced slavery, unfair laws, and discrimination. When unjust laws changed, African Americans gained access to better education, jobs and homes. Black people used their strength and courage to overcome many sad times. They began to make their American dream come true. Black people and other citizens, too, are proud of the great achievements of so many African Americans. There are many famous Black doctors, lawyers, teachers, religious leaders, scientists, inventors, politicians, entertainers, athletes and businessmen in the United States. You probably can name some people who fit into each category.

While the concept of democracy and freedom for all is a great idea that most Americans believe in, there is still much that needs to be done to make it

true for everyone. As we read the history lessons from the past, we learn how badly people felt when they were discriminated against and mistreated because of their race. Since we know how terrible it was, we must try to make sure it does not happen again to others.

We all can do something to make sure that discrimination stops. We can all work to understand people who look, worship, or talk differently than we do. Their stories are, also, a part of America's story. With the election of President Barack H. Obama, an opportunity has come to ensure that more people see the importance of learning about the accomplishments of African American people in all walks of life.

As historians study and write about all of America's people, they understand it is good to represent, celebrate and respect different cultures. The story of our country's greatness cannot be told without sharing how all of its citizens live and work together to help America thrive. Historian and scholar W. E. B. DuBois stressed that Black citizens are Americans. They helped to build the infrastructure of the country. He shared this thought when he said that the United States belongs to all of its citizens:

*Your country? How came it yours? Before the pilgrims came we were here. Here we have brought our three gifts and mingled them with yours: a gift of story and song—soft stirring melody in an ill-harmonized and unmelodious land, a gift of sweat and brawn to beat back the wilderness and lay the foundations of this vast economic empire, Around us the history of the land centered for thrice a hundred years. Actively we have woven ourselves with the very warp and woof of this nation—we have fought their battles, shared their sorrows, mingled our blood with theirs and pleaded with a headstrong people to despise not Justice, Mercy and Truth....* W. E. B. DuBois. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*

Adapted from an article published in *Inquisitive Kids* (2007) by Gwendolyn J. Kelley



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

# Do's and Dont's of Teaching Black History

**W**hat every teacher should know and do to ensure students get the most out of African American History and its celebration in and beyond Black History Month:

### DO...

**Incorporate black history year-round**, not just in February. Use the month of February to dig deeper into history and make connections with the past.

**Educate yourself.** What knowledge do you lack about black history? Textbooks are notorious for omitting information about the struggles of communities of color. If your students' textbooks are inaccurate or incomplete, most likely yours was too. Learn with your students, and feel comfortable admitting when you don't know all of the answers.

**Reinforce to students that "black" history is American history;** make it relevant to all students.

**Relate lessons to other parts of your curriculum**, so that focusing on a leader, like Fred Shuttlesworth, who was a founding member of Alabama Christian Human Rights Council and organizer of boycotts in Birmingham, expands on the social disparities that existed and how a particular leader worked to impact society. Thus, such information expands upon rather than diverts from your curriculum.

**Come to class fully prepared for the lesson**, even if that means finding your own materials and resources with accurate and relevant information. Most textbook resources will not provide more than a superficial and one-sided perspective.

**Include the political and social context** of the community's struggle for social justice. For example, talk about Daisy Bates' political affiliations, especially those with the NAACP and her political ideologies. You see her bravery not as just a personal act but as coming out of community determination. Additionally, students should be aware of the nine students who entered the segregated Central High School over the objections and protests of white

parents. They should also be aware that President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to escort the nine to the school doors safely amid white parents screaming racial epithets, carrying insulting signs and throwing objects, including spit.

What every teacher should know and NOT do to ensure students get the most out of black history and Black History Month:

### DO NOT...

**Stop your "regular" curriculum**, to do a separate lesson on Rosa Parks, on the Civil Rights Act, or on Martin Luther King, Jr. This trivializes and marginalizes anything you are teaching, making these leaders a token of their culture and ethnicity. Students will get the message that the diversion is not as important as the "regular" curriculum.

**Decontextualize heroes or holidays**, separating them from the larger social movement or historical place. Great leaders don't make history all by themselves. For example, if you teach about James Farmer, who as a founding member of CORE initiated the Freedom Rides and worked in the Richard Nixon administration, you must also address the work of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), a group of black and white ministers founded in the late 1950s, as well as the 1960s Freedom Rides which began when high school, college students and ministers went into the Deep South on Trailways and Greyhound busses to test and confront the segregation policies and practices in southern bus depots.

**Focus on superficial cultural traits based on stereotypes.** It's ok to celebrate black music, but teachers should also explore the political and social contexts that give rise to musical forms like hip hop. African Americans gave spirituals, blues, gospel, ragtime, jazz, bebop, R&B, rock and roll, rap and hip hop to America. So, these songs represent the intellectual and philosophical perspective of a people. Each one of the musical genres represents specific political, economic or social experiences. Frederick

Douglas speaking of the spirituals, that he called “sorrow songs” gave context to the songs when he explained:

*They told a tale of woe...they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from slavery.*

**Talk about black history in solely “feel-good” language,** or as a thing of the past. This fails to help students examine how racism still occurs today.

**Limit the presentation to lectures and reading.** Be sure to allow students an opportunity for discussion and reflection.

**Teach with little or inaccurate information.** Be sure resources don’t promote a Eurocentric perspective, or else you run the risk of misrepresenting historic figures and social movements.

**Shy away from controversial, ambiguous, or unresolved issues.** Tell the truth about racial realities in developmentally appropriate ways.

*Used by permission*

*Adapted from material by Pat Russo of the Curriculum & Instruction Department at SUNY Oswego.*

*Published on Teaching Tolerance*

*(<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/dos-and-donts-teaching-black-history>) Used by permission*



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

# Why Focus on Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy?

*"My sense of cultural competence refers to helping students recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture, where they are more likely to have a chance of improving their socioeconomic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead". – Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006)*

### WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

**Cultural competence** is a system of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable teachers to work effectively with students in cross-cultural situations.

- The term includes using knowledge about individuals and groups to develop specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes to use in appropriate cultural settings to increase every student's educational performance.
- The word **culture** is used because it implies the pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group.
- The word **competence** is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively.

### WHY ARE WE CONCERNED ABOUT IT?

Students from diverse backgrounds have cultural backgrounds that often differ from their teachers who are mainly white. They bring their home language and experiences with them. How educators **validate and affirm** a student's home language and home culture for the purposes of **building and bridging** student success in the culture of school and mainstream society is a challenging job for most educators. If intentional interventions do not occur, frequently students are left to their own devices to make those connections. In other words, either they get it or not; they sink or swim on their own.

We recognize that achievement gaps are real, but frequently, we fail to see that students caught in this situation are too often **underserved**. Too many of these students are labeled underperforming versus underserved not because they failed, but because they failed to receive the full services a school should offer them if the school had been truly responsive to helping all students achieve.

One of the most pressing concerns of educators who work with students from cross-cultures, in

particular African American and Hispanic students who have been consistently underserved in the academic setting, is deciding what change needs to happen. There is concern about this question:

*What major shift must take place in everyone's mindsets to intentionally and deliberately expect and deliver change in how we move large groups of students from low performance to become large groups of students who demonstrate proficiency and performance well beyond the minimal expectation?*

### WHO SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

In the broader community, responsibility falls on many and includes: everyone in our global world community; every legislator who is concerned about economics and the well-being of their constituents; every citizen who desires a competent and productive workforce that will not put an undo burden on society; every parent who wants the best for each child entrusted to the school system; and every child who comes to school eager to learn in kindergarten, but is ready to drop out by Grade 8, long before completing high school because school doesn't seem relevant.

Everyone in the educational setting - from professors in higher education who prepare preservice teachers, administrators who plan and supervise professional development for current teachers, to teachers on the front line of instruction who work most intimately with students - must challenge themselves to move past **preconceived mindsets** and past practices that have not worked, and begin to search for new ways to reach all students. Teachers must be willing to accept the challenge and equip themselves with new knowledge, tools, practices and strategies that are supported by decades of best-practice research. Only then can they move beyond reading and discussing theories about how traditionally low-performing and underserved students

learn and begin to use culturally responsive best-practices that really work on a daily basis.

## WHAT IS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY?

*Pedagogy is the art of how teachers teach. According to Geneva Gay, culturally responsive pedagogy is the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them. Relevant classroom practices produce positive results that increase academic achievement and maximize each student's desire to learn and excel.*

### To do this, teachers must all commit to:

1. Accepting that culture does make a difference
2. Learning how to validate and affirm home and community culture through instructional practices and the environmental setting
3. Finding ways to bridge and build connections between home culture and school culture
4. Viewing students without mastery of standard English as **Standard English Learners** (SEL) and help them learn the language of school as a "second language" (See the work of Dr. Noma LaMoine)
5. Helping students embrace the value of **code-switching** their behaviors to fit the school's expectation for success
6. Improving use of culturally responsive pedagogy delivered to our students
7. Finding culturally responsive ways to manage a classroom
8. Stressing collective interactions rather than focusing mainly on individuality
9. Using purposeful text and materials that affirms the culture and experiences of students
10. Making learning more engaging
11. Increasing expectations of what students can learn and do
12. Increasing professional development to help teachers and staff integrate, use, and improve cultural competency skills and culturally relevant practices so they will all intentionally:
  - a) Show, discuss, and use data that is cross-tabulated by race and gender at each grade level to reveal which populations of students need deliberate intervention
  - b) Improve delivery of standard-driven instruc-

tion with strategies that keeps students involved and engaged

- c) Help students make connections to the relevance of what they are being taught
- d) Find the strengths students bring with them from their culture to school rather than reinforce a deficit perception of what students don't have, don't know, and can't do
- e) Build meaningful relationships with students
- f) Help students bridge their culture to ways of finding success in the school culture
- g) Build learning communities that **deliberately** focus on addressing issues related to delivering culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)

## HOW DO TEACHERS BECOME CULTURALLY PROFICIENT?

The first key is understanding that cultural proficiency does not happen in a short period of time. It is a process that requires willingness to change attitudes and beliefs.

*Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003) define **cultural proficiency** in schools as:*

- "A way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them."
- "A way of being that enables people to successfully engage in new environments."
- "An approach to addressing diversity issues that goes beyond political."

They further state that several essential elements contribute to a system or institution's capacity to become more **culturally competent**. These components are found at every level of an organization and are evidenced and reflected in:

- Policy making
- Administrative decisions
- Practices used throughout the system
- Attitudes, structures, and policies impacting services delivered by the organization and those employed by the organization

### Cultural competency occurs when all employees:

1. Assess culture. **And can ...** Name the differences.
2. Have the capacity for cultural self-assessment. **And can ...** Recognize that we all have a culture.

3. Value diversity. **And can ...** Claim the differences.
4. Are conscious of the dynamics involved when cultures interact. **And can ...** Find ways to bridge differences.
5. Have institutionalized culture knowledge. **And can ...** Change to make a difference.
6. Make adaptations to meet the needs of those they service, and provide those services while reflecting a clear understanding of cultural practices. **And can ...** Continue to adapt as needed.

In other words, **culturally responsive teaching** can be found when teachers in learning communities are equipped to:

1. Develop and embrace a knowledge base about cultural diversity and the reality of the cultural experiences that students bring to the classroom
2. Own their own culture and the feelings, beliefs and values that they have about other cultures
3. Include ethnic and culturally diverse content in the curriculum
4. Demonstrate and build caring, safe, and inviting learning communities
5. Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction based on state expectations
6. Communicate effectively with ethnically diverse students, parents, and community partners

Understanding Cultural Competence and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy leads us on a path or journey to find the answers to two important questions:

1. Why is it important for our students to see themselves mirrored in the curriculum and in the instructional strategies that teachers use in their learning environments?
2. Why is it important to use strategies that meet our students **where they are** and take them on a journey to **where they need to be** to have successful academic experiences?

To prepare and provide a learning environment that addresses these questions, particular focus and attention must be directed toward developing culturally relevant practices that:

- **Equip school leadership** to model culturally responsive practices
- **Improve school climates and cultures** so that children are valued and affirmed and optimal achievement is expected from all students
- **Empower teachers** with effective teaching and learning strategies
- **Strengthen relationships** between students, teachers, parents, and community

These four areas specifically address the need for focusing on cultural competence and implementing



culturally responsive pedagogy or practices so that educators will become culturally proficient and engaging. This then is the admonishment to all educators: If what was tried in the past has not yielded the desired results, then that disconnect should provide great motivation to try some new strategies and move toward implementing culturally responsive practices that value and affirm all students and subsequently lead to the outcomes that we all desire.

*The Historic Journey* Project offers an answer to some of these pressing questions about culturally relevant pedagogy and practices. How we teach is just as important as what we teach.

- *The Historic Journey: Yes We Can* and its standards-based companion Teacher's Curriculum Guide, connect the election of the first African American President Barack Obama to the struggle and story of those who came before him to make this historic event possible. It is an exciting tool to help school districts address accountability and to engage students with information that leads to their increased cultural understanding.
- This project has led to students demonstrating the audacity to hope for an excellent education as they become engaged in relevant assignments linked to mastering state standards while being connected with events and issues that they care about, and activities that personally capture their interests.

Gwendolyn J. Kelley, 2010

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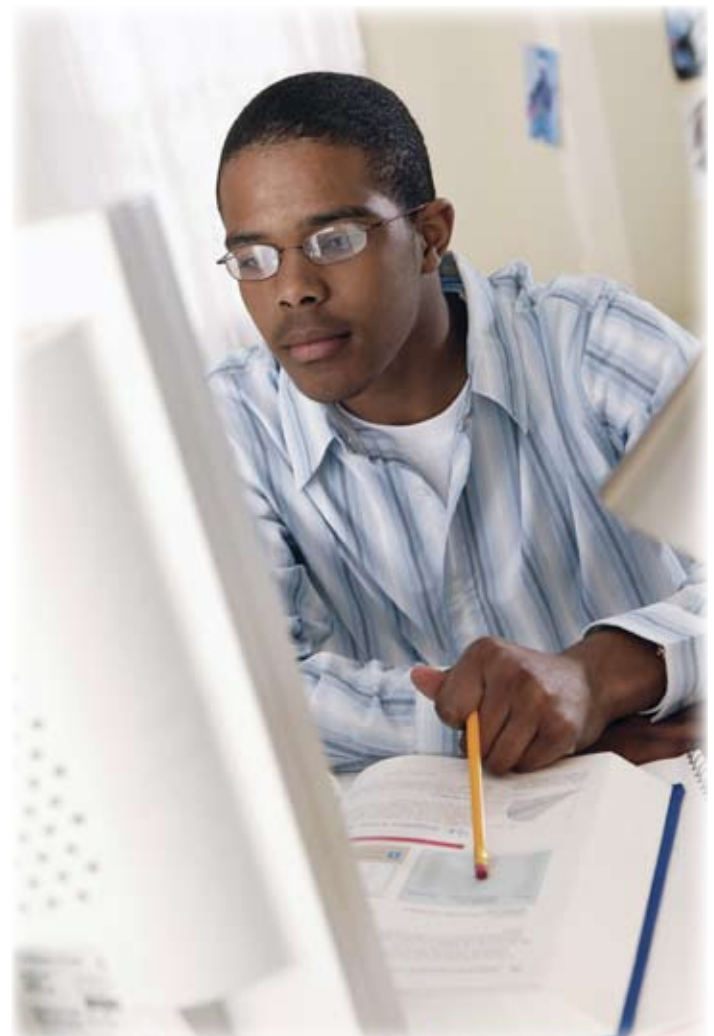
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## LESSON 1 | Grades K-12

# Overview– Beginning the Journey

Lesson Duration: 1–4 Class Periods (30 – 50 Minutes) for Each Section

**OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:**

1. Where are we going?
2. Where are we now in our understanding of this topic?
3. Why are we trying to discover more?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we know we have arrived at any new understandings about this topic?

**CONTENT THEME:**

Explore the significance of the African American journey and the historical developments that took place which lead to the election of an African American as the 44th President of the United States of America.

**STANDARDS/ESSENTIAL SKILLS:**

All of the standards listed below are directly related to, or can be closely connected to, this lesson. Depending on the direction the teacher wishes to focus the lesson, these standards provide a foundation for teachers to adapt and implement a standards-based curriculum approach.

**Social Studies - IN 2007:**

*K-8 HISTORY: Historical Knowledge* IN K.1.2, K.1.3, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.4, 4.1.6, 4.1.7, 5.1.5, 5.1.7, 6.1.4, 6.1.10, 7.1.8, 8.1.10, 8.1.16, 8.1.18, 8.1.20, 8.1.26 *Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Research* IN K.1.4, 1.1.10, 2.1.7 3.1.7, 4.1.15, 5.1.20, 7.1.19, 8.1.28 **CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT:** IN K.2.1, K.2.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 4.2.2, 4.2.5, 5.2.6, 5.2.7, 5.2.9, 6.2.5, 8.2.1, 8.2.4, 8.2.8, 8.2.9 **GEOGRAPHY:** K.3.2, K.3.6, 1.3.2, 2.3.2, 3.3.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 5.3.1, 5.3.8, 6.3.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 8.3.7, **HS US History: USH** 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.7, 4.3, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.1, 9.5, **HS US GOVERNMENT: USG** 1.1, 1.9, 1.11, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.15, 5.1, 5.7, 5.8, 5.10, 5.12, **HS GEOGRAPHY AND WORLD HISTORY: GWH** 3.1.4.1, 4.2

**English/Language Arts - IN 2006:**

*Reading: Word Recognition and Vocabulary Development:* IN 4.1.2, 5.1.3, 6.1.4, 7.1.3, 8.1.3, *Informational, Research and Persuasive Texts – Response to Literature* IN 5.5.2, 7.5.2, 8.5.2, 9.5.2

**Language Arts Arts - Common Core 2010:**

*CCR Standards (K-5) are woven into activities:* **LITERATURE:** Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3, Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10, **WRITING:** Text Types and Purposes: 1, 2, 3, Production and Distribution of Writing: 4, 5, 6, Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9, Range of Writing: 9, **SPEAKING AND LISTENING:** Comprehension and Collaboration 1, 2, 3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4, 5, 6, **LANGUAGE:** Conventions of Standard English 1, 2

*Knowledge of Language 3, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4, 5, 6*

**Math: Common Core Standards, 2010:**

*Problem Solving: All grade levels; Geometry: Gr 5, 6, 8, Operations and Algebraic Thinking: All grade levels, Number Sense Gr. 5, 6, 8, Measurement and Data: All grades*

**Science - In Standards 2000:**

*Nature of Science and Technology – The Scientific Enterprise: (IN 4.1.4, 5.1.3, 6.1.4, 6.1.5)*

**OBJECTIVE:**

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the DVD, *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can"* and to begin implementing ideas on how the DVD can help students to make connections between what they already know and what they will be learning in the near future about the events in American history that lead up to the election of President Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. A variety of lessons from cross-curriculum areas are included in this overview sampler of lessons.

**The students will:**

1. Complete a pre-writing activity to connect their prior knowledge to what they already know about the Obama election.
2. View the DVD and reflect on its content.
3. Analyze recurring themes in the video after viewing the video.
4. Offer suggestions about additional activities they could complete related to the video.
5. Have the option to choose other projects from a list of student-generated ideas about how to continue learning about events and images shown in the video.
6. Participate in other projects selected by either the teacher or students.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:****BEGINNING THE JOURNEY**

From the first engrossing image presented in the DVD, *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can"*, students can view Barack Obama's seemingly improbable and impossible journey to the highest public office in the United States. Through the images of courage, conviction, perseverance and ultimate

sacrifices of individuals past and present, “*An incredible journey of epic proportions unfolds*”. Viewers are able to experience the power of belief and the “*audacity of hope*” that President Obama wrote about in his book of the same title, *The Audacity of Hope*.

The images in the DVD are set to the words and music of a gospel song, “*Never Would Have Made It*”. This combination of music and visual images showcases the close connection between the African American experience and the music of its culture which often tells a story of struggle, reveals the mood of its people and celebrates their current conditions in the nation. The words to the song provide a background for images that move from the continent of Africa during the slave trade era, on to the modern Civil Rights Movement and finally to the election of President Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America and the winner of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. The video ignites the inexpressible gratitude and hope felt by a people who did not expect to see this day in history come so soon.

Doubtless, students know much more than most adults could possibly imagine they do about the campaign, the election, and the actual time that the President has spent in office since the inauguration. The video looks beyond the political ideology of Republican, Democratic or Independent principles and platforms which students and their parents may share. It opens a window of opportunity to feel the overwhelming sense of joy that breaks forth when a people receive a measure of vindication from past injustices; it captures the strength that breaks forth when others join in the celebration because these wrongs are somehow being addressed. This DVD also provides a platform for students and teachers to begin a common dialogue about the ideas and principles on which the nation is founded, that being ... “*all men are created equal.*”

This introductory lesson offers the option to review and use ideas that other young people and teachers have generated after viewing the DVD. It also presents an opportunity for students who view the video for the first time to brainstorm their own ideas about what they could do to extend their own learning as a result of seeing the DVD. Some of those ideas may be completed individually and others may

require small group work or full class participation.

Whichever options are selected as extension activities after seeing the DVD will allow the students an opportunity to relive a historic moment in history. Barack Obama’s election marks a time when Americans can address with pride how so many Americans from diverse backgrounds experienced a movement that swept the nation. The African American journey has not come to an end because there is an African American in the White House. By remembering past wrongs, discrimination and injustices and remembering those who fought to make a difference, we can begin to fulfill our nation’s future goals and dreams by believing, “Yes We Can.”

**NOTE:** At the end of this lesson, there are three resources to use with the DVD with optional extension activities. They are entitled:

1. Student generated ideas for use with the DVD
2. Cross-curricular activities across subject areas
3. Four other lesson ideas to use with students
4. Cross Curricular Extension activities – grades KG - 3

#### **ADDITIONAL LESSONS:**

This first lesson was modified and served as a pilot project for teachers, schools, districts and community groups to begin using this material. Other lessons in the Teacher’s Guide cover more specific topics presented in the DVD related to African American history, heritage and the 2008 election. These lessons will provide background knowledge and activities that match academic standards and lead to a greater awareness of the African American experience in America’s history and its connection to President Obama’s historic journey.

#### **KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was this election so special?
2. What hindered an African American from becoming elected president of the United States before 2008?
3. What major milestones in America’s history led to President Obama being elected?
4. Since the election is over, is it important to still consider the uniqueness of President Obama’s election? Why or Why not?



5. Do I really need to know about the past? Why or why not? What impact does the past have on the future?
6. What is the message the DVD's creator was trying to portray? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?

### VOCABULARY:

historic, hope, epic, journey, courage, conviction, sacrifice, perseverance, ideology, vindication, audacity, cynicism, creed

### INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

1. DVD of *The Historic Journey, "Yes We Can"*
2. DVD player
3. Student Journals or prewriting paper to help students focus on the lesson
4. Pencils/pens/markers
5. Chart paper/Overhead Projector
6. Lists of Student Generated Ideas (*one per group*)
7. Information selected from the Cross-Curricular lessons as needed

### DIFFERENTIATION AND/OR MODIFICATIONS:

1. Students will work in pairs or small groups on activities.
2. Students will self-select activities that capture their interest.

### ACTIVITY: FINDING THEMES WITHIN *THE HISTORIC JOURNEY: "YES WE CAN"*

**METHOD OF DELIVERY:**—Student-generated writings, showing DVD and holding discussion

### PROCEDURE:

#### The teacher will:

1. View the video prior to class and note ideas or images that the students may not be familiar with. You may want to pause at intervals and list topics you want to cover during the discussion.
2. Plan to keep the pace of the lesson quick-moving and provide a way to hear from as many students as possible during the discussion.
3. Prepare a pre-viewing writing activity that introduces the lesson, such as, having the students write what they know about President Obama's election.
4. Introduce the DVD by asking the students to look for and write down anything that they see repeated several times in different ways in the video.

5. Ask students to remember things that they may have questions about as they watch the video. (*You may want to write: What recurring themes appear in the video?!*)
6. Show the DVD – *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can."*
7. Provide a chart/overhead so students reflections can be written.
8. Be ready to answer questions about the video and ask probing questions that help students identify recurring themes.
9. Write the vocabulary word list on the board or on a chart.
10. Have students share what they know about each word in connection to what was viewed in the DVD.
11. Allow time for students to write a reflective paragraph.
12. Allow time for students to share.
13. Bring closure to the lesson and tell what objectives were addressed for the lesson.
14. Introduce students to the extension activities from which they can choose additional projects that relate to the DVD.
15. End the class with the following quote by Barack Obama.

*"And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: "Yes, we can."*

#### The students will:

1. Do a pre-viewing writing activity to focus attention on the topic.
2. Have journals or paper and pens or pencils available to use.
3. View the DVD.
4. Record themes or patterns that recurred in the DVD.
5. Discuss what they saw and how they felt when they watched the video.
6. Ask questions about events that they did not understand.
7. Work with a partner to generate a list of the themes they saw repeated in the video.
8. Share in the whole class discussion.
9. Review vocabulary words.
10. Write a reflective paragraph on the video.
11. Share their thoughts about what they wrote.

- Choose extension activities that interest them, for additional follow-up to the lesson.

### DIRECTIONS:

- Tell students the objective of the class session and what standards will be addressed while working on this lesson and extended activities related to the DVD.
- Have students complete a 2-minute pre-writing activity.
- Ask students to, independently, (*2 minutes*) use their notebooks or journals to list 4 - 10 things (*depending on the grade level*) they already know about the presidential election of Barack Obama and why people around the world were so interested in the election. They can also list their impression about how the world is still reacting. These things could be negative or positive.
- Match students with partners.
- Allow students to share their lists with their partner. (*2 minute – 1 minute each*)
- Instruct students to take brief notes on the DVD as they watch it.
- Remind them to analyze themes, ideas or events that keep recurring or happening over and over in the video.
- View the DVD – *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can."*
- Have students discuss with their partner the things they noticed from the video. Each person should take one minute to share his/her ideas without being interrupted. Then the process is reversed for one minute with the other person either talking or listening. (*2 minutes*)
- Have partners report out to the class what they discussed. (*Time will vary.*)
- Have students review the list of vocabulary words on a handout or written on the board and then tell how these words relate to the DVD.
- Ask students to work with their partners to think of synonyms for each of the words. (*2 minutes*)
- Provide time for students to share their answers. Examples include: (historic – notable, hope - wish, epic - impressive, journey - trip, courage bravery, conviction- passion, sacrifice- give up, perseverance - determination, ideology - belief, vindication - evidence, audacity - boldness, cynicism - skepticism, creed - belief)

- Then ask students to think about why the video was created.
- Have students respond to this question. "What message did the DVD communicate?"
- Individually, have students write a short essay in their journal or as a written exercise to be handed in about:
  - things they saw in the video,
  - their impression of the video,
  - and what they are feeling about the election now that it is over. (*5 – 10 minutes*)
- Remind students to use the rubric guide from the state standards for their essay.
- Ask if there are any volunteers who would like to share what they wrote.
- To end the lesson, have students comment on the quote from Barack Obama. (*See follow-up section*)

### FOLLOW-UP:

- Allow a few students to answer reflection questions about the lesson. (*See below*)
- Inform students that they will use student-generated ideas or lessons from the cross-curricular extension activities in the future to extend the lesson and to complete some activities that interest them.
- Close out the lesson with the Obama quote and get feedback from the students on its meaning.

*"And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: "Yes, we can." – President Barack Obama, Election Night Speech, Nov. 4, 2008.*

### ASSESSMENT:

- Observe and note responses to discussion questions.
- Check journal entries or collect essays to score them for a grade.

## STUDENT REFLECTION AND DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS:

### Students will answer the following questions:

1. What was the main point of the lesson?
2. What did I learn today that was new information?
3. How did I feel about the images I saw on the video?
4. Was President Obama's election special to me? Why or why not?
5. Now that the celebration is over, what legacy do I think President Obama will leave?

## TEACHER REFLECTION:

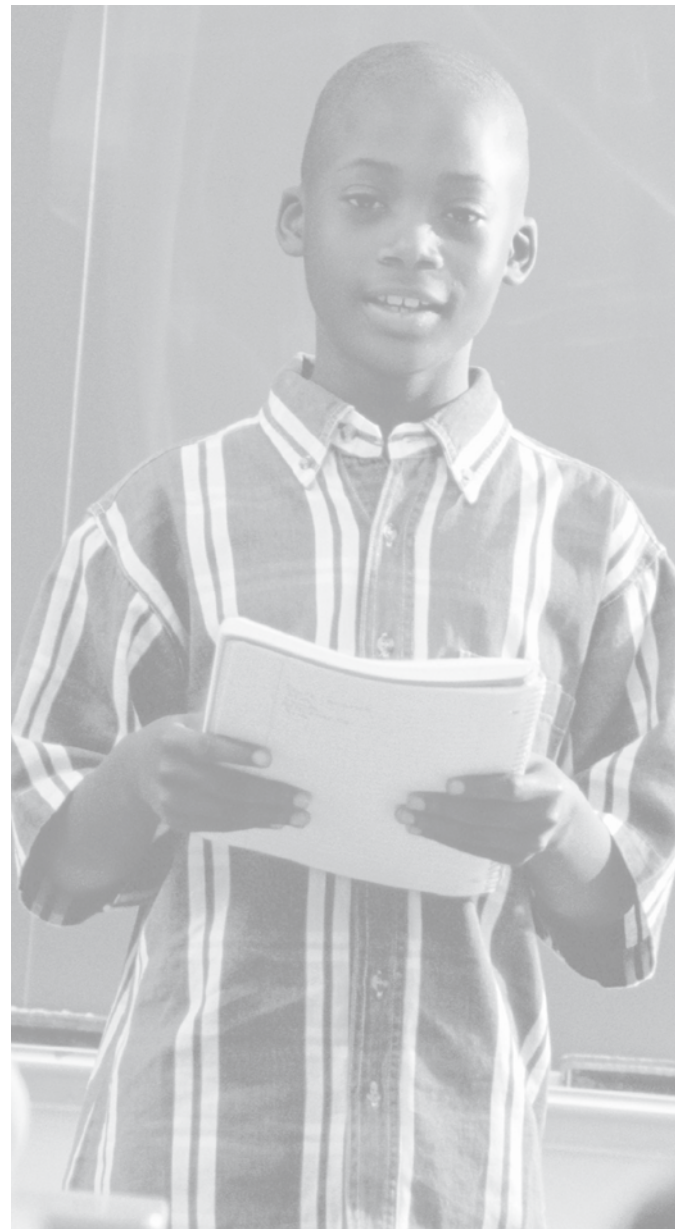
1. The students had the necessary materials to complete the lesson.
2. The students recognized a connection to the lesson topic and were able to see how it related to their lives.
3. The students satisfactorily met the lesson objectives when they completed the writing assignment, as measured by the related state standard.
4. Students have a clearer understanding about documenting historical events and the power images have in recapturing the past.
5. The lesson was paced to provide time for students to complete a self-reflective assessment activity and share their ideas about their understandings related to the topic.

## EXTENSION LESSONS:

### WELL CLASS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Have students to work in teams of 3–4 people and generate a group list of activities that they could do after having seen *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can."*
2. Have the class come back together and let each group share their ideas.
3. Create a combined class list.
4. Afterward, share the list on the following page of ideas that was generated by another group of students.
5. Have students look over their list and then look over the other student generated list and compare the similarities and differences.
6. Allow students to choose one of the ideas as a special project.
7. Provide time or directions on when the activity could be completed.

8. The projects could be done as a whole class or some could be done as individual projects. (*Teacher discretion*)
9. Have students share their final project with the class.
10. Students may work independently, with a partner or in a small group.
11. In addition, look at the list of Cross-Curricular Extension Activities suggested by teachers after using the DVD.
12. Also find the suggested activities targeted specifically for Grades Kg – 3.
13. A teacher or other adult community workers can implement these ideas with students in different types of learning environments.



## STUDENT GENERATED IDEAS FOR USE WITH THE DVD

After viewing *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can,"* students suggested a list of activities that they would like to see accompany the video either through pre- or post-activities.

1. Write a biography, create a poster, or write an essay about somebody in the DVD.
2. Create skits related to the DVD.
3. Write a poem, song or make their own video of how they felt about President Obama being elected or about their feelings after the video.
4. Create PSAs – to show the struggles of African Americans and other groups and show how we need to make sure that we don't go through this again.
5. Complete projects about your ethnic group: Include accomplishments made and what they had to overcome.
6. Research why people in other countries cared about this election.
7. Research a leader in our community.
8. Open class discussion about the video.
9. Make a journal entry about their feelings after viewing the video.
10. Include more Black history throughout the year such as the Civil Rights Movement. Have people come in and discuss their personal experiences.
11. Write a comparison piece about the similarities and differences in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Obama's speeches in the video.
12. Discuss the struggles African-Americans have gone through prior to President Obama being elected, relate them to the freedoms that many minority groups have today.
13. Create a timeline of important events that have led to President Obama being elected.
14. Create a KWL chart – to focus on what they know, want to know, and learned (*pre- and post movie watching*).
15. Stop at various points in the video and explain important points.
16. Complete projects about significant people who helped pave the way for positive change in our country.
17. Complete project on current events – Consider how far African-Americans have progressed and areas that still need improvement.
18. Ask students how they felt when President Obama was elected.
19. Create a lesson to discuss why it is relevant that he is the first African-American President.
20. Complete a Venn Diagram comparing President Obama and Dr. MLK, Jr.
21. Look at contrasting views on President Obama being elected. – Why are some elated and others not?
22. Create a bingo game to help students understand and learn about African-Americans and other individuals who have paved the way for our freedom.
23. Complete a "Walk in President Obama's Shoes" Project. Students could write a narrative from their viewpoint about what it would be like to be President Obama and how they would react to various issues he faces.
24. Create a PowerPoint about the struggles African-Americans have had, how they have overcome them, and the struggles that are left to conquer today.
25. Create flash cards over history and culture.
26. Write an essay on how Dr. MLK, Jr.'s dream/speech has changed our nation.
27. With the idea that people all over the world seemed to care about this election, create an activity to show that skin color doesn't matter when it involves equal opportunities.

## CROSS – CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH THE DVD

**NOTE:** The following list provides activities that teachers or youth workers can use with the DVD, *The Historic Journey: "Yes We Can."* These ideas can be used in a school setting or community program to help instructors plan engaging projects, special events and student-generated displays that extend the learning experience for students who view the DVD.

### ART ACTIVITIES:

Students will prepare a picture collage of noted African Americans and historical background pictures featured in the video. A picture of President Obama should be the focal point of the collage.

Graphic artists use devices such as maps, time lines, charts, various graphics and pictures to summarize and clarify information. In small groups, have students work together to design and create examples using these and other pictorial devices to help summarize what they saw in the video. Have students share their work.

### MUSIC AND DRAMA ACTIVITIES:

Use the words to the song, "Never Could Have Made It," written by Marvin Sapp and discuss why this song may have been chosen for the DVD (the words can be found at the end of the last unit of this packet). Marvin Sapp was recording an album and he had decided not to include this song on the album. His wife however, encouraged him to include it and he followed her advice, without realizing that this particular song would become one of the best-known songs on the album. Like Sapp, few people believed Barack Obama had a chance to become President, but he never gave up and he realized there were others there to help him.

Have the children discuss a time when they followed someone else's advice and it turned out well. Have them list 5 people who have influenced their lives and encouraged them. Let them share their list with a partner or small group of students and tell about one of the instances and why it was so important to them. Think about other songs written about someone who inspired others or songs that show that other people are supporting you and seeing potential inside of you that you may not know is there. Such motivational songs include, "We Are the World," "When You Believe," "One Shining Moment" "I

*Believe I Can Fly,* "Never Give Up" and "Anything". Have students uncover the words to these songs and write a skit about someone who had to overcome a problem and eventually succeeded. Let them play a motivational song that they choose at the beginning and ending of their skit.

Invite local artist in your geographic area to come to your class/school and perform. Examples include: local African drummers, character actors, or a Griot (Gree-ah)-a storyteller. (The storyteller would narrate, in story form, the highlighted features presented in the "Yes We Can" video. The story will focus on the atrocities of slavery, why they existed, the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King's accomplishments, and the election of Barack Obama as President to the highest office in the United States of America).

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES:

Invite a local African American dance troop or ensemble from your area to your class/school. The performers present, through movement and selected routines, the story of hardship to jubilation for African-Americans. Ending the performance, the dancers sing an energetic chant using "Yes We Can" to phrases that have been told over the years that African Americans could never do. The chant ends with the phrase: We can even be President of the United States, "Yes We Can"!

### ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES:

Have students create a booklet about the DVD. Give each student 3 sheets of paper and instruct them to fold them in half. Then use 2 staples on the seam of the paper to hold the booklet together. Allow students to make a booklet entitled *The Historic Journey* with pictures and sentences that show 10 of the main ideas that they learned from the DVD. Use one page of the booklet for each idea. Be sure to have students place sentences at the bottom of each page to explain the main ideas that they are representing.

Find the news article written by Jodi Kantor, and posted in the New York Times Learning Network section. The article entitled, *Nation's Many Faces in Extended First Family*, helps readers discover how President Obama's family mirrors the changing diversity of America. Have students read the article, take notes from it and uncover more about President

Obama's extended family. Have students make a family tree showing the people mentioned in the article who are in President Obama's family. Include the countries where they live or have lived.

#### REFERENCE:

[http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured\\_articles/20090126monday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20090126monday.html)

In addition, have students research their own genealogy and create a family tree. The emphasis is to support students as they begin to understand their heritage and how their ancestors helped to pave the way for them today. They will develop a better understanding of how they have walked in someone's footsteps to achieve their goals. Remind students, *"It takes every ancestor you have had to be you. If any one of them had been omitted, you would not be you."*

#### REFERENCE:

**President Obama's Genealogy found on a Chicago**

Sun Times link:

[http://www.suntimes.com/images/cds/special/family\\_tree.html](http://www.suntimes.com/images/cds/special/family_tree.html)

#### MATH ACTIVITIES:

##### Longitude and Latitude Activity – Triangular Slave Trade Route

Students can use map exploration to locate major areas in Africa where slave trades took place from 1440-1861. Provide students with a map that outlines Africa and its nations. Have students locate ports of departure from which African men, women, and children were taken away from Africa on slave ships. Also have students identify several stops on the Triangular Slave Trade routes. Students can work in groups to calculate the latitude and longitude of the locations and write down the appropriate coordinates.

##### FIND MY PLACE – PARTNER EXCHANGE

Students can research the birthplace of several famous African Americans mentioned in the DVD. Using maps, globes or Internet searches, students can identify the latitude and longitude of their birthplace. Have students plot measurements related to the people and places they chose and record an event connected with them. Here's how they could do this using two sheets – one as a worksheet and one to give to their classmate.

1. Either prepare two sheets ahead of time, or allow students to prepare their own two charts.

Have students use 2 sheets of paper to draw 2 charts. The charts will have 4 columns and 8 rows.

2. On the board or a chart, write this list: Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Fredrick Douglass, Marcus Garvey, Ida B. Wells, Emmett Till, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Selma March, The March on Washington, Oprah Winfrey, Sidney Poitier, African captives, African American winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. Then draw a line to divide the list into 3 groups.
3. On one sheet have students choose 6 events or people listed from above.
4. Use the first sheet as a worksheet for the students to create their lists. Have them draw 4 columns with 8 rows. On the first row have them write their name and the words: My Worksheet. On the second row, in the first box, have them to write: "My Choices". In the next column let them write: "A Place Connected" (to this person or event). In the third column, let them write: "What happened here?" In the last column, write: "Latitude and Longitude."
5. Now, have students record their names or events (My Choices) in the first column. They will need reference material to find out something about these people and events.
6. Then let them find places on the map associated with those people or events and write that information in the 2nd column (A Place Connected). It could be a birthplace, a place where they lived or worked or where an event happened. Let them write the place by the person or event.
7. In the 3rd column, let them write something connected to the person or event that happened in the place. "What Happened Here?"

#### Sample:

##### Worksheet Title: My Worksheet

Names	City, County or State, Event,	Situation	Map Skills
My Choices	A Place Connected	What Happened Here?	Latitude; longitude
Barack Obama	Chicago	Election Day Speech	41° 51' 0" N / 87° 39' 0" W

8. In the last column write the "Latitude and Longitude" where they found the places they

listed. Check to see if the students have the correct information listed and have gotten everything filled in.

- Now have the students create a new worksheet with almost the same headings. Make 4 columns and 8 rows. On the first row write "Your Worksheet from \_\_\_\_." (Students add their name.) On the second line in the four boxes write: My Choice, A Place Connected, What Happened Here? and Longitude and

#### Sample:

**Worksheet Title:** *Your Worksheet from* \_\_\_\_\_

Names	City, County or State, Event,	Situation	Map Skills
My Choices	A Place Connected	What Happened Here?	Latitude; longitude
		Election Day Speech	41° 51' 0" N / 87° 39' 0" W

Latitude. BUT ... This time leave 2 columns blank – the 1st and 2nd ones - My Choice and A Place Connected. Fill in information from My Worksheet for the 3rd and 4th column – "What happened here?" and the "Longitude and Latitude" column. Now have the students exchange their papers so that their partner can fill in columns 1 and 2. Fill in column 2 first, this will give the place. Then chose the person or event, this will go in the first column. Have students check with each other to see how close each partner got to the place and name that was listed with each coordinate.

### MATH ACTIVITIES - FIGURE IT OUT

Teachers should copy the informational passage below about President Obama and have students read this date-filled story about his life.

#### There are several things they can do with the information.

- Have students create a timeline about his life.
- Make a timeline of Malia or Sasha's life and tell what their dad was doing at different periods of their lives along the timeline.
- Have students create and share math problems for a friend about President Obama. Then take turns sharing each other's work to see if they can solve them. The problems could be:
  - Addition and subtraction problems about approximately how old President Obama was

when various things happened in his life

- Problems (3 – 5) about the approximate time differences in years between various events that occurred in his life
- NOTE:** Remember, the years will be approximate unless we know the months each event occurred. Why is that? Have students share. (Depending on the month, the actual age may vary by a year or less.)

#### REFERENCE:

<http://www.biography.com/articles/Barack-Obama-12782369?part=0>

#### SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES:

Research the life of Barack Obama. Identify key events in his life that helped prepare him for the role of President. Create a timeline of his life and/or write an essay on how events in his early life and young adulthood prepared him to be the first African American President of the United States of America. Include his life of public service and the ways he accepted and promoted the ideas of civic responsibility.

Arrange for students to take a tour of an African American Museum, such as, the Crispus Attucks Museum, located in Indianapolis on the grounds of the Crispus Attucks Medical Magnet High School. This museum showcases the history of the African and African American experience linked to experiences unique to Indianapolis, but also connected to events in the United States and Africa. Check around your city to see African American attractions. Museums have documented accounts of history that make written material more accessible to students.

#### SCIENCE ACTIVITIES:

Research the types of foods and other vegetation that have been exported from Africa and are now staples in the United States. Create a chart showing food items that have been exported from Africa to the United States. Students can share foods they have researched. For an example see: Jessica B. Harris, "Same Boat, Different Ships: An African Atlantic Culinary Journey," in *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*, ed. Sheila S. Walker (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001), pp.169-182.

## COPY AND DISTRIBUTE:



President Obama was born August 4, 1961 in Hawaii, the 50th state added to the United States of America. His father was a native of Kenya and his mother was an American citizen, born in Kansas. In 1967 he moved to Jakarta, Indonesia. He graduated from high school with honors in Hawaii in 1979. He graduated from Columbia University in New York City in 1983. He moved to Chicago to work there in 1985. He entered law school in 1988 and became the first African American editor of the *Harvard Law Review* in February of 1990. He graduated magna cum laude (*with highest honors*) from Harvard Law School in 1991.

After returning to Chicago, he married Michelle Robinson, a successful lawyer, on October 3, 1992 and he worked as a community organizer in the city. He has two daughters. Malia, his oldest daughter, was born July 4, 1998 and Sasha, nickname for Natasha, was born August 10, 2001. Obama has

written two books. The first one, *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, was published in 1995; and, the second one, *The Audacity of Hope*, was published in 2006.

In 1996 he was elected to the Illinois State Senate. In 2000, Obama made an unsuccessful run for a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives. In November of 2004, after running for office in the U. S. Senate, he became the third African American in the country's history to become a U.S. Senator.

In February of 2006, he announced his candidacy for President of the United States. He campaigned and won enough votes to be selected as the nominee for the Democratic Party on June 3, 2008. On November 4, 2008, he won the election to become the President of the United States. Then, on January 20, 2009, he took the oath of office and became the President of the United States of America.

## LOOKING AT CAREERS:

President Obama is very interested in students being successful in both science and math. His program is called the STEM initiative. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Some Africans who came to the United States knew how to use herbs and roots to cure people of various illnesses. Have students research the use of herbs and roots as remedies for sickness and disease. How do people use alternative natural medicines today? Should people use these natural remedies or should they rely on drugs created by modern medicine? What do you think? How much money do drug companies make each year? How much money do people spend on natural remedies or alternative medicine? What jobs in science and math are connected to making medications and alternative medicines? Make a display showing what you find related to this topic.

Find the name of African Americans who have excelled in these areas. Have students work in 4 teams. Each team can take one area of the STEM initiative (*Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*) and create a display with reports about people from each area.

## REFERENCE:

<http://blog.ostp.gov/2009/11/23/president-announces-educate-to-innovate-initiative-today-at-white-house/>

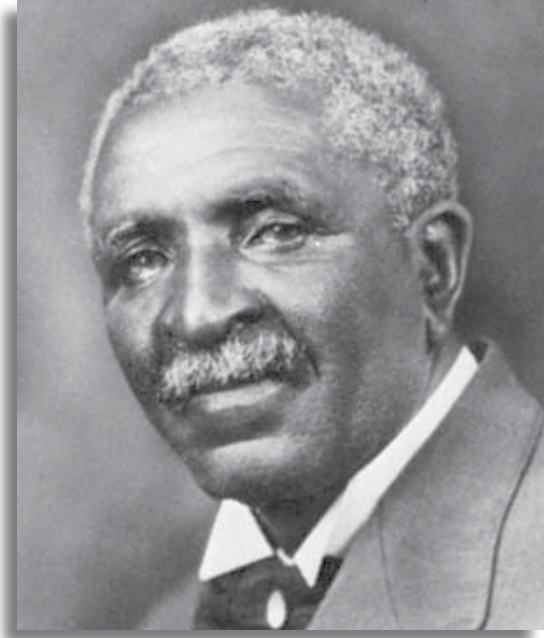
## EXTENSION LESSON – GRADES KG – 3

After teachers use activities in the Overview Lesson, they can use other parts of the document throughout the year. The activities listed on page 25 provide some ways to modify additional lessons found in the document.

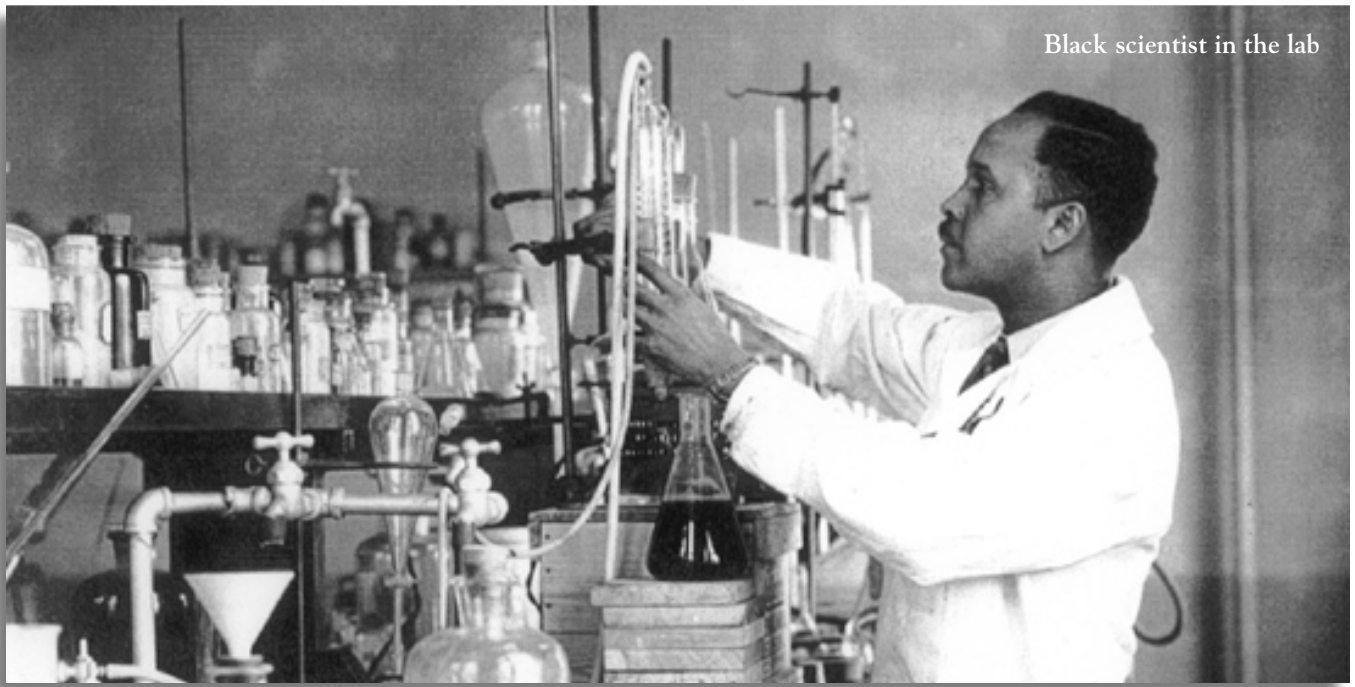




Dr. Charles Drew, *Physican, Scientist and Researcher*  
*Pioneer of Blood Plasma*



Dr. George Washington Carver, *Scientist*



Black scientist in the lab

# CROSS – CURRICULAR EXTENSION ACTIVITIES – GRADE KG - 3

## PRE- READING ACTIVITIES (GRADES KG – 3)

Choose one or two books about President Barack Obama. Then choose 5-10 vocabulary words from the book(s) to write on the board or chart paper to discuss with students. Discuss character traits of a good leader and make connections with what students learned about President Barack Obama in the stories that were read.

Read grade appropriate books to students about the election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States.

- *Yes We Can! A Salute to Children from President Obama's Victory Speech* Author; Barack Obama
- *Our 44th President Barack Obama Compliments of the Family Foundation Center Coloring and Activity Book*
- *Step into Reading Barack Obama Out of Many One* Author; Shana Corey
- *Meet President Barack Obama* Author; Laine Falk (Scholastic News Nonfiction Readers)
- *Obama's Pajamas* Author; Jeff Nave
- *Barack Obama Our 44th President* Author; Beatrice Gormley
- *What's So Great About Barack Obama* Author; Claire O'Neal
- *Barack Obama Facts About the Presidents* Author; Joseph Nathan Kane
- *Son of Promise, Child of Hope* Author; Nikki Grimes
- *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters* Barack Obama

## KINDERGARTEN

Have students draw or color pictures of President Obama and write or dictate a sentence about what they learned about our 44th President from the stories that were read.

## FIRST AND SECOND GRADE

Have students draw or color pictures of President Obama and write a report about what they learned about our 44th president from the stories. Write about the traits of a leader that Barack Obama needs to be a good president. Complete the KWHL Chart, What have you learned about President Obama?

## REFERENCE:

### Enchanted Learning

[www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/obama](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/obama)

## FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD GRADE

Start a KWHL chart with students and discuss what they already know and would like to learn about President Barack Obama and the election. Choose vocabulary words from several of the books and write them on the board, or chart paper to discuss with students. Be sure to include some character traits of a good leader. (KWHL CHART – What I Know, What I Want to Learn, What I Learned)

## LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES:

Write an essay about the most important qualities a president, governor, mayor or principal should have and explain why. Make a list of character traits that are necessary for these jobs. Identify people in your class, home and community who demonstrate these traits. Create a medal for someone who you feel is, or will make, a good leader.

Possible topics for essays/writing projects include:

- If I Were the President
- What Does the President Do?
- A Letter to the President
- A Biography of the President
- A Biography of Mrs. Obama
- Bo, The President's Dog
- If the President Came to My School

## REFERENCE:

### Enchanted Learning

[www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/obama](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/obama)

## ART:

Make a collage using pictures of the people in the video and include Barack Obama as the central person in the collage. Teachers will need to gather pictures for students. Teachers can use pictures from reproducible materials or magazines. Students could also draw images. Additional pictures are available in this Teacher's Curriculum Guide and can be reproduced for this project.

Make a book about the President and the White



House and the people who live and work there.

Have children bring in a shoebox to make a “*Hope Box*.” Allow children to decorate the shoebox with patriotic colors. Somewhere on the box have children put the words, “*I am America’s Hope*.” When the box is finished, allow the children to keep the boxes at school or tell them to keep the box in a special place. They should begin collecting poems, wise sayings, pictures of people who have jobs they admire, newspaper or magazine articles about people who help others, along with index cards where they periodically record their hopes and dreams for the future. At the end of the year, let students share what they saved. This idea is adapted from the lesson plan for *Child of Promise, Son of Hope* by Nikki Grimes.

### **MUSIC AND DRAMA**

Students can listen to and learn parts of the song “*Never Could Have Made It*” and draw pictures or write about people in their lives who have helped them or who have modeled positive behavior.

Students can write, memorize or recite poems and create songs that they sing about President Obama and other presidents for a President’s Day program.

### **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**

Students can use a large sheet of paper and fold it in half. On one side, they can create a family tree of the Obama family members who live in the White House. Next to that family tree, students can create a family tree that includes the people who live in their household. Students may also include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who they know. Then have

children write an essay about the importance of family members working together to help others succeed in life.

### **MATH**

The class could create a “*Big Timeline*” of President Obama’s life. Students can create a timeline of their own lives using photographs or pictures that they draw of themselves from birth to the present. Students will need to put their age under each picture and write a sentence under each picture about something they remember about that time in their lives.

### **SCIENCE AND MATH**

President Obama wants more students to think about becoming scientists and mathematicians. He thinks that many children will be working in these jobs when they grow up. Have students name jobs that will require good math and science skills. Keep a list of jobs posted throughout the year and add to the list as discussions occur throughout the school year related to math and science careers.

An Internet site was developed to help children practice their math skills. It is called Mathdaily Obama Math Challenge. It is designed to let children see what types of problems children in Singapore are working on each day. It could be an interesting place for students to strengthen their math skills.

### **REFERENCE:**

**Mathdaily Obama Math Challenge**

<http://www.mathdaily.com/games>

## FOUR OTHER LESSON IDEAS TO USE WITH STUDENTS

This list of ideas of activities can be used with the video as either pre- or post- activities:

### LESSON IDEA 1: "African Americans Who Have Paved the Way"

- First, gather a list of famous African-Americans who were mentioned or whose names were shown in the video. See General Timeline of Events Covered in The DVD.
- Next, have students select the name of one person and complete a poster, Power Point, poem, etc. about that person.
- The completed project must provide background information about the person, including what he/she did that was significant to African-American history and why the person's contributions are still relevant for contemporary Americans. Finally, students will present their final projects to the class.



### LESSON IDEA 2: "The Civil Rights Movement"

- Once students have finished their "African Americans Who Have Paved The Way" project, attention should shift to those individuals who were fighting for rights during the Civil Rights Movement.
- Class activities would focus on what the movement was about:
  - o Why the movement was needed?
  - o Why some people choose not to *participate*?
  - o What it was like to live during that time (*not being able to use public facilities, or use other accommodations that were afforded to others*)?
- Have a couple of speakers come in and discuss their experiences of living during the Civil Rights Movement; speakers should be from varying age groups and ethnicities (*adult, teenager, kid during the Movement*) so that students can get differing perspectives.



- Let the students use journals to write a short journal entry about what type of person they think they would have been during the movement (advocate, radical, assimilationist, non-participatory) and why. Finally, discuss how the Civil Rights Movement led to other movements in the United States and abroad.

### LESSON IDEA 3: "Yes We Can" Video Activities

- After the students have completed all of the pre-activities, show the video. By doing this, the students should have a better understanding of why the video is so important, especially for those who lived during the Civil Rights Movement.
- Lead a discussion on the video:
  - o How did the video relate to our previous lessons?
  - o What did they think of the video?
  - o Why is the song "Never Would Have Made It" a good choice for this video?
  - o What is significant about this song?
  - o Why were people in other countries cheering when President Obama won the presidency? Why do they care, etc?



### LESSON IDEA 4: "How far have we come? Where do we go from here?"

- After watching the video and discussing it, students will write an essay over how far our nation has come on addressing issues related to the Civil Rights Movement and then address where we need to go from here.
- Students will be expected to use ideas from our previous lessons to help guide their essay ideas. Students will need to present their ideas and support them with evidence. Their ideas should be fully developed and thoroughly explained.
- Students will end their essays by explaining what role they will play in the future of our country.

# STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET I

## LESSON I – OVERVIEW – BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DIRECTIONS:

Use information from the reading below about President Barack Obama. Create and solve math problems using the dates within the passage. Then take turns solving each other's problems. The problems could be either:

- Addition and subtraction problems about approximately how old President Obama was when various things happened in his life
- Problems about the approximate time differences in years between various events that occurred in his life



President Obama was born August 4, 1961 in Hawaii, the 50th state added to the United States of America. His father was a native of Kenya and his mother was an American citizen, born in Kansas. In 1967 he moved to Jakarta, Indonesia. He graduated from high school with honors in Hawaii in 1979. He graduated from Columbia University in New York City in 1983. He moved to Chicago to work there in 1985. He entered law school in 1988 and became the first African American editor of the Harvard Law Review in February of 1990. He graduated magna cum laude (*with highest honors*) from Harvard Law School in 1991.

After returning to Chicago, he married Michelle Robinson, a successful lawyer, on October 3, 1992 and he worked as a community organizer in the city. He has two daughters. Malia, his oldest daughter, was born July 4, 1998 and Sasha, nickname for Natasha, was born August 10, 2001. Obama has written two books. The first one, *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, was published in 1995; and, the second one, *The Audacity of Hope*, was published in 2006.

In 1996 he was elected to the Illinois State Senate. In 2000, Obama made an unsuccessful run for a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives. In November of 2004, after running for office in the U. S. Senate, he became the third African American in the country's history to become a U.S. Senator.

In February of 2006, he announced his candidacy for President of the United States. He campaigned and won enough votes to be selected as the nominee for the Democratic Party on June 3, 2008. On November 4, 2008, he won the election to become the President of the United States. Then, on January 20, 2009, he took the oath of office and became the President of the United States of America.

**Create 3 problems from the story.** (Example: How long was the time between Barack Obama being elected to the State Senate in Illinois to the time when was elected President of the United States?) Answer:  $2008 - 1996 = 12$  years

Question 1:

Answer:

Question 2:

Answer:

Question 3:

Answer: