

Black History Month is during February celebrated in America. This month is dedicated to celebrating and acknowledging the contributions of African Americans to American culture. For example, at my elementary school, the students would dress up as their favorite black historical figure and give a presentation on that person. We would also play a school wide trivia game that tested us on African American history.

Although February is the shortest month of the year, historian Carter G. Woodson and other historians began celebrating black history on the second week of February in 1926 because it coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president in the United States and passed the Emancipation Proclamation, a bill that freed over 3.5 million slaves in 1863. Frederick Douglass was a former slave and abolitionist who passionately argued for the end of slavery through his speeches and his famous autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.

Some of my favorite black historical figures are W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Charles Drew, and Shirley Chisholm. W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the most important African-American activists and writers during the first half of the 20th century. He co-founded the NAACP, which stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and had radical political views that advocated for the improvement of standards for the black working class. Malcolm X was a Minister for the Nation of Islam, human rights activist, and prominent black nationalist leader. He was also a courageous advocate for the rights of blacks, and often called out the injustices millions of black americans continued to face over 200 years after the end of slavery. Charles Drew was a surgeon who invented methods of storing blood plasma for transfusion and organized the first large-scale blood bank in the U.S. He also graduated from the same college as me in 1926. Finally, Shirley Chisholm was the the first African American woman elected to Congress and the first woman and African American to seek the nomination for president of the United States in 1972. She was an outspoken advocate for women and minorities during her 14 years in Congress.



Quiz:

1. When was black history month first celebrated?
2. When did Abraham Lincoln pass the Emancipation Proclamation?
3. What type of novel did Frederick Douglass write?
4. What does NAACP stand for?
5. How long did Shirley Chisholm serve in Congress?