

BLACK HISTORY month

Black History Month is an annual observance celebrated every February in the United States, dedicated to honoring the contributions, achievements, and history of African Americans. It highlights the important role African Americans have played in shaping the nation's culture, politics, and society. The month also serves as a time to reflect on the struggles and triumphs in the ongoing fight for racial equality. Originally recognized as Negro History Week in 1926, it was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial celebrations.



Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme.

“The Black History Month 2025 theme, “African Americans and Labor,” focuses on the ways that “work and working of all kinds—free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, vocational and voluntary—intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.”



South Loop School's Middle School Admin Team: Celebrating Black History & Culture, as well as MAKING history in our school community.



BLACK HISTORY FIRSTS



FIRST LAWYER

John Mercer Langston was the first Black man to become a lawyer when he passed the Bar in Ohio in 1854. John Mercer Langston was also the great-uncle of Langston Hughes, famed poet of the Harlem Renaissance.



FIRST BUS BOYCOTT

While Rosa Parks is credited with helping to spark the Civil Rights Movement when she refused to give up her public bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 —inspiring the Montgomery Bus Boycott—the lesser-known Claudette Colvin was arrested nine months prior for not giving up her bus seat to white passengers.



FIRST SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Thurgood Marshall was the first African American ever appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. He was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson and served on the court from 1967 to 1991.



FIRST SENATOR

Hiram Rhodes Revels was the first African American ever elected to the U.S. Senate. He represented the state of Mississippi from February 1870 to March 1871.

BLACK HISTORY FIRSTS



FIRST WOMAN REPRESENTATIVE

Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman elected to the House of Representatives. She was elected in 1968 and represented the state of New York. She broke ground again four years later in 1972 when she was the first major party African American candidate and the first female candidate for president of the United States.



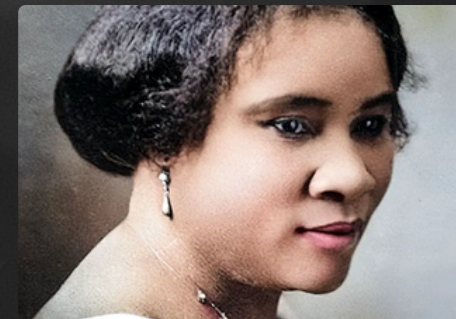
FIRST PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL PLAYER

On April 5, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play Major League Baseball when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.



FIRST BLACK ATHLETE IN TENNIS

Althea Gibson became the first African American to compete in a pro-world tennis tour and in 1956, the first African American woman to win a Grand Slam title



FIRST SELF MADE MILLIONAIRE

Madam C.J. Walker was born on a cotton plantation in Louisiana and became wealthy after inventing a line of African American hair care products.



FIRST OSCAR WINNER

In 1940, Hattie McDaniel was the first African American performer to win an Academy Award.



FIRST BILLIONAIRE

Robert Johnson became the first African American billionaire when he sold the cable station he founded, Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 2001.



FIRST BLACK PRESIDENT

In 2008, Barack Obama became the first Black president of the United States.



FIRST BLACK VICE PRESIDENT

Kamala Harris became the first woman of African or Asian descent to become vice president

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Soul Food recipes to enjoy all year long:

The Soul Food Pot: Authentic Southern Soul Food Recipes

40 Best Soul Food Recipes for Black History Month (2025)



Black History Family Book Recommendations
<https://tinyurl.com/Family-Book-Recommendations>



BLACK HISTORY month

CELEBRATING IN THE CLASSROOM

South Loop Students have been celebrating black history all month long. Take a look below at some of the ways our students have been embracing black culture and history this month.

PRE-K students learned about AA architects, created blueprints to build buildings out of various boxes, toothpicks, marshmallows, popsicle sticks, etc. PK also had an author study on Donald Crews and read a lot of AA books on inventors, mathematicians, scientists and history makers. They also made stop lights after learning about Garret Morgan. Another PK class learned about the famous Black artist Alma Thomas. White House when they lived there. Students got to make some "Alma Art" of their own using a similar style of painting to hers.

KINDERGARTEN learns about Black History heroes. Then, they do a little presentation on someone we have learned about or someone they want to teach us about.

WHAT IS A HERO??

In FIRST GRADE students have been researching influential leaders for Black History Month, either working as a class or independently. The culmination of their research in these classrooms has been in the form of writing a chapter book, where they share what they've learned about the leaders they researched.

2nd grade students created art inspired by African American artists during STREAM Stations this past February.

3rd graders are researching an influential African American person of their choice based off of the Little Leaders books, writing a biography essay, and creating a short slideshow presentation of the person to share with the class.

In ART, students worked on: Jean-Michel Basquiat Portraits (K), Alma Thomas Inspired Landscapes (1st), and Reggie Laurent Inspired Shapes (2nd/3rd)

In 4th grade Science/Writing students learned about Chicago House Music created by African-American innovators in the 1980s. After listening to some early house tracks students created their own house beats using a web-based drum machine app. In ELA, students have learned about Langston Hughes' life and poetry. They wrote poetry inspired by the style and figurative language used by Hughes.

In 4th grade math class, students analyzed African art patterns from Kente and Bogolan cloths and Adinkra symbols, identifying different angles and geometric shapes. Inspired by these designs, they created their own patterns to tell personal stories and wrote about their work using the writing process.

K-3 music students are learning about black music genres. Students are singing songs of the black culture such as spirituals and call and response work songs. Genres that we focused on are Spirituals and Jazz music. 4th-5th grade experienced a journey through all genres starting with spirituals and finished with Hip-Hop. The 6th and 7th grade music students are doing Black History Month Research projects where they research biographical information on black artists that have had a tremendous impact on American music.

CELEBRATING IN THE CLASSROOM

Both 5th and 6th grade Social Studies classes are doing Black History Month projects / presentations.

5th grade visited the Museum of Science and Industry on 2/21/25 to view the Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition. In science, we researched and shared African-American scientists and their accomplishments.

5th grade students in ELA have been reading and analyzing speeches from Black leaders and activists to create a blackout poem. In math, students researched famous black mathematicians and scientists and wrote math equations and word problems linked to the person they researched.

In media, 4th–6th grade students created Infographics about black INFLUENCERS of the past and of the present. Students learned that the term “INFLUENCER” goes beyond just social media.

7th–8th graders created movie trailers that depict significant events in black history.

6th/7th Grade Science students have been doing research all month about African-American scientists and inventors! They have had a slide of research a day! They will also be extracting DNA from strawberries (Inspired by Dr. Marie Maynard Daly’s biochemistry work).

In 7th Grade ELA, students are preparing to do their interactive read-aloud (and an extension activity) with students in pre-K through 4th grade, using children’s books that celebrate Black joy and excellence.

In 8th grade math, students researched black mathematicians who have made significant contributions to the fields of mathematics and science, and created presentations to share with their class.

EMBRACING BLACK HISTORY & CULTURE YEAR ROUND

Even though Black History Month is coming to an end, we can continue to celebrate by supporting Black owned businesses, restaurants and the arts within our communities.

8 WAYS TO HONOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH (ALL YEAR!)

1. Educate Yourself on the Black History in Your Community.
2. Visit a Black or African-American History Museum.
3. Learn about Black Music History.
4. Read Books Written by Black Authors.
5. Watch Films or Videos by Black Creators.
6. Support Black-owned Businesses.
7. Support Influential Black-led Nonprofits.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Explore Black Arts In Chicago

CHICAGO
CHOOSE CHICAGO

Support
LOCAL
Businesses