

Fun Facts:

African American (Black) History Month

TEACHING GUIDE



About Fun Facts

Fun Facts are student-friendly handouts that tie statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau to holidays, anniversaries, and other observances. These fact sheets, although originally created for teachers to use in classrooms, are easily adapted for use at home to keep kids entertained and learning. They are designed to be used at varying grade levels and across different subjects.

Using African American (Black) History Month Fun Facts in the Classroom or at Home

Teachers and parents/caregivers should give their student(s) time to read and digest the information in the African American (Black) History Fun Facts handout. Below is a list of ideas for using the fact sheet with children in any and all grade levels.

Any Grade Level

Discussion. Potential discussion questions include:

- What section of the Fun Facts' handout interests you the most and why?
- Did you know that the high school education gap narrows among young African Americans? Use this visualization to discuss gains in black educational attainment by age <www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/comm/black-history-month.html>.

Journey to work. Rosa Parks inspired the U.S. Supreme Court ruling to end segregation when she refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1955. Students can learn more about Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement by viewing census data and records at <www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2018/february_2018.html>. Have students explore the Census Bureau's State Facts for Students tool at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/resources/data-tools/state-facts.html> to find out how many people in their state use public transportation to commute to work.

Elementary School Level

Writing exercise. As the Fun Facts handout notes, Ella Fitzgerald is known as the “First Lady of Song.” Have students write a short essay about their favorite American music artist that includes interesting facts about them, and read aloud to the class or a partner.

Who’s my age? The handout lists the median age of African Americans in the United States in 2019 as 35. Have students use the Census Bureau’s State Facts for Students tool at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/resources/data-tools/state-facts.html to research the number of boys and girls in their state who were ages 8 to 14 when the stats were collected. They can compare their state’s data with that of neighboring states.

Middle School Level

Musical aspirations. Scott Joplin, also known as “The King of Ragtime,” was an African American composer and pianist in the late 1800s and early 1900s, who wrote over 100 ragtime pieces, a ragtime ballet, and two operas. He inspired many entertainers and ragtime enthusiasts. Students can learn more about him by viewing data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies at www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2017/april_2017.html. Start a discussion by asking students if they have any musical aspirations or a favorite musician that inspires them. Students can find out the number of employed people 16 years and over with music-related occupations in the United States at data.census.gov. Search “musicians.”

Visualize occupations. Students can create a bar graph showing the occupations of Black men and women. Referring to the “Occupations” section of the Fun Facts handout, have them view the following table <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/race/2019/ppl-ba19/ba19tab8.xlsx> to find the data for their graph.

High School Level

Creative thinking. W.E.B. (William Edward Burghardt) Du Bois was an African American social scientist and writer who fought for equal rights for Black Americans throughout his life. In 1904, he wrote a Census Bureau bulletin on Black farmers in the southern United States. Students can read the bulletin at www.census.gov/history/www/census_then_now/notable_alumni/web_du_bois.html and create an infographic using data from three or more of the tables in it.

Sports fans. Students can learn about the amazing African American baseball player Willie Mays and other famous African American sports greats by viewing census data and records at www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2019/september_2019.html. They can choose one of their favorite sports figures and compare the differences and similarities between their sport then and now, such as their uniforms, safety equipment, rules, etc.

