

# Equalities Tutor Time: Black History Month 2020

Produced at Fullbrook School

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The Guardian

Old Indian Photos.in

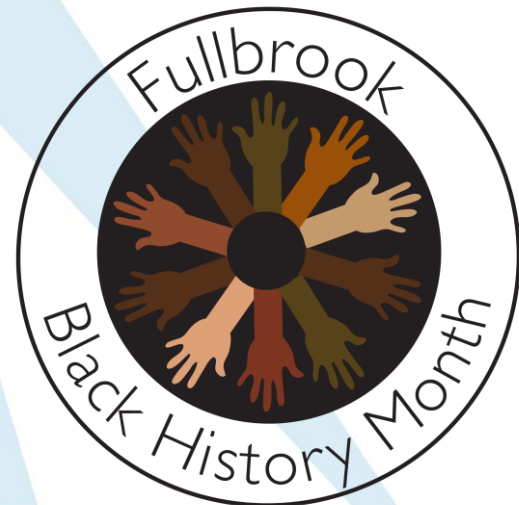
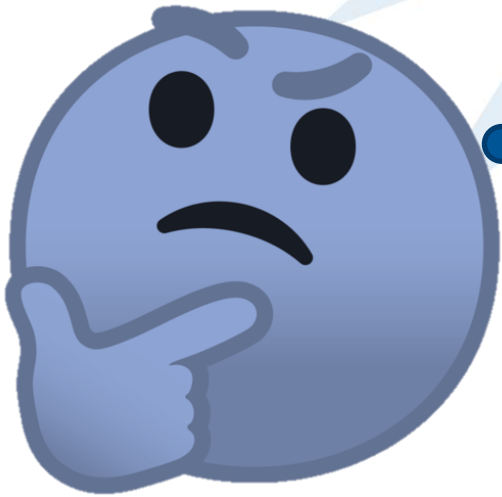
BBC Bitesize

Black History Month.co.uk

English.nhs.co.uk/blog

# Big think

What are the important parts of British History?



# Did your tutor group mention things like...

The first settlements of the British Isles?

The creation of the NHS?

The invasion of the Romans?

The Tudors?

The Victorian Era?

WWI and 2?



# Did your tutor group mention things like...

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The Tudors?

The Victorian Era?

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How many of these would you link to Black History?



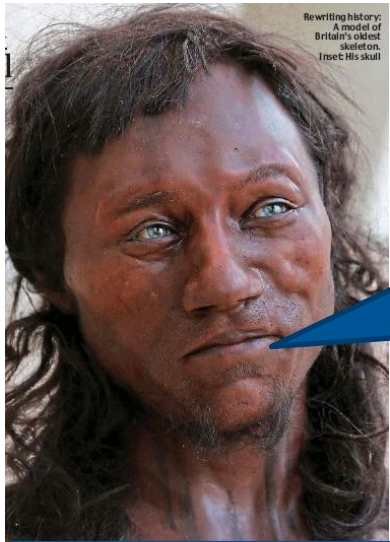
Welllll.....



Keep reading!



# British Black History Month



Rewriting history:  
A model of  
Britain's oldest  
skull on.  
Inset: His skull

Early inhabitants

October is Black History Month, where we acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Black, Indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC) to our history,

We also aspire to counteracting the whitewashing British history and the resulting invisibility of people of colour within it.



Tudor court musicians



Indian WW2 Soldiers

In recent years, Black History Month has expanded its definition to include all people of colour, not just those who identify as black.

# The first settlement of the British Isles...

Using genetic analysis, this is a reconstruction based on the skull of the oldest known complete skeleton in Britain!

Around 10,000 years ago, this man and his people were some of the first known Britons. Today, about 10% of white British ancestry can be linked to this ancient population.

How commonly known do you think it is that Britain did not start off populated by white people?



The Cheddar Man, found in Cheddar Gorge.

# The Roman Invasion of Britain

Many Roman emperors were Black, as parts of Africa were part of their Roman empire at this time. Under black rule, the Romans fought off Goths, the Parthians and the Tartars, fortified Hadrian's wall, built larger public infrastructure such as baths, and created legislation to open up Roman citizenship and turn Rome into peaceful, a multicultural hub for those who lived and work there.



**Caracalla ruled 211  
– 217 AD**

Many of the Roman soldiers in Britain at the time or Roman occupied Britain were black, and evidence of this remains today.

Do you think most people imagine the Romans as a multicultural people? To be Roman, and have access to Roman rights, you just had to be part of the Empire, not be a certain colour or be from Rome.



# The Tudors

Until the very beginning of Tudor England, Spain had been run by Muslim African (Moorish) rule for 800 years, where they had introduced Spain and Portugal to more crops, world knowledge, paved streets and street lamps, further access to education, and more. After gaining their independence, the now well developed Spain and Portugal were big players in European power and politics.

As a country wanting its own stake in power and politics, Tudors had a lot of interaction with Spanish Moors, whether as musicians to Henry VIII's court, in the entourages of Spanish royalty (Catherine Aragon, Phillip II) that married Tudors or as merchants and aristocrats

At that time, North African Moors were seen as part of great and wealthy nations full of education and invention. How much would you say the propaganda surrounding slavery has an impact on that reputation?



# The Victorian Era and industrial revolution

The impact of BIPOC on this era is really too much to fit on one slide!

The whole of India was once part of the British Empire, from which Britain extracted a wealth of spices, jewels, textiles and military force. During the last 14 years of her life, one of Queen Victoria's most trusted and beloved attendants was Abdul Karim, an Indian Muslim whom she promoted to Commander of the Order and learned some Urdu from, alongside many philosophical and spiritual conversations.



**Industrial Revolution** - Without raw products such as cotton from the West Indies, produced en masse on plantations by slaves, much of the wealth and success brought about by the industrialised factory production of cotton would not have been possible. While we may think about the industrial revolution as being to do with factories in predominantly white countries, much of what was actually being processed in those factories was produced in countries populated by people of colour, under slave owner rule – Britain owes much of its wealth and success to this exploitation.



We may think of WWI and WW2 as being predominantly white European wars, but many BIPOC fought and laboured to support British and Allied forces.

**Commonwealth Troops:**

15,000 West Indians (Caribbeans)

140,000 men India

180,000 Africans also served from Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone, and the King's African Rifles, recruited from Kenya, Uganda and (Malawi).

25,000 Black South Africans

2,700 Māori and Pacific Islanders.

Commonwealth Troops:

1,440,500 from India

413,000 from Australia,

36,000 from South Africa,

128,500 from New Zealand

134,000 from other colonies

Also, approximately 5,500 West Indian RAF members

Troops from these colonies fought and laboured across a wide range of key locations

Many served in the RAF, there were commonwealth troops in Burma, North and East Africa, Italy and Greece

It is also worth acknowledging that during WW2, India was contributing a lot of crios and food to Britain for the soldiers. During this time, a horrific famine struck India. Britain chose to keep taking what little food there was to feed British troops during the war, and to prevent Japanese troops gaining traction in India, many areas of India were intentionally burnt and destroyed by British government (meaning Japanese troops could not set up base there), exacerbating a famine that killed some 3 million Indians.

# The Invention of the NHS

The UK had a severe **labour shortage** after World War Two, especially in the transport network and the newly created National Health Service

The economy of the Caribbean islands, seriously underdeveloped **by Britain** was in crisis with high levels of unemployment. (unsurprisingly, British occupation and exploitation of resources had not left the Caribbean in a good state),



The NHS, like so much of postwar Britain, was built by immigrants and could not have survived in its current form without them. There were recruitment campaigns inviting nurses in Malaysia, Mauritius and elsewhere in the empire as well as the Caribbean to come and help rebuild Britain and create the NHS. Today, roughly a third of the tier-2 visas for skilled migrants go to NHS employees.

Today, the NHS is the biggest employer of people from a BAME background in Europe – 20.7% of the NHS workforce which represent over 200 nationalities.



So when we talk about Black British History, we are not talking about minor details, but a lasting impact on some of the biggest events that made the British Isles.

- What did you learn in this session that you didn't know before?
- Has it changed your perception of the sort of people that made Britain what it is?
- What would you tell a friend or family member after what you've looked at this session?