

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

 *February* 

2026 Theme: A Century of Black History Commemorations

Quick Facts

Black/African American History Month is an annual commemoration dedicated to recognizing the achievements, triumphs, and struggles of Black/African Americans throughout history. The observance originated in February 1926 when historian Dr.

Carter G. Woodson planned the inaugural week-long observance of Black history, coinciding with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Over time, this week evolved into a month-long period focused on educating the public about often overlooked aspects of Black culture and history. Its primary purpose is to highlight the significant contributions that the Black community has made to society while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the Black experience in America.

Language Updates

Whether you use the term Black or African American, both are used during the month to reflect different aspects of identity and history. Black History Month is the widely recognized popular name, while National African American History Month is the official title used in formal government proclamations. The distinction lies in their scope: "Black" is a broad racial umbrella term. It includes anyone of African descent, including people in the U.S., the Caribbean, South America, and Africa itself. Some people prefer "Black" because it recognizes a global identity and a shared history that transcends a single country. "African American" specifically refers to those living in the US with the shared identity of having African ancestry. By using both terms, the celebration remains inclusive of all people of African descent while specifically honoring the unique heritage and citizenship of those within the American experience.

Formatting Note: It is now standard practice in style guides (like the AP Stylebook) to capitalize the "B" in Black when referring to people, as it denotes a shared cultural and ethnic identity rather than just a skin color.

Links

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[Cultural and Religious Observances](#)