

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 at any grade level.

Any Grade Level

Discussion. Potential discussion questions include:

- What section of the fun facts' handout interest 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 bus 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 civil rights movement by viewing census data and records at <www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2018/february_2018.html>. Teachers, parents or caregivers can have students explore the Census Bureau's State Facts for Students tool at <www.census.gov/schools/facts/> to find out how many people in their state commute to work using public transportation.

Elementary School Level

Writing exercise. As noted in the Fun Facts handout, George Washington Carver invented different uses of the peanut. Students can research these different uses and write a short summary about one; then read aloud to a partner.

Who's my age? The handout lists the median age of African Americans in the United States in 2019 as 34. Using the Census Bureau's State Facts for Students tool at <www.census.gov/schools/facts/>, students can 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."

Black population by gender. Students can research and record their state's Black population totals of males and females between 2010 and 2019 using the table "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2019" at <www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html>. They can use the data they collect to plot a line graph to show the nine-year trend.

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.