

EMPOWERED BRILLIANT & BRAVE: GREAT WOMEN OF BLACK HISTORY

CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDE

BRIGHT STAR TOURING THEATRE



Black women have played important roles in history, making significant contributions in many areas, including the arts, civil rights, education, and more. In theatre, Black women have used their talents to tell powerful stories and bring important issues to light. Let's learn about a few inspiring Black women and their achievements!



"TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE, YOU MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP. WE WILL FAIL WHEN WE FAIL TO TRY." - ROSA PARKS



ABOUT OUR SHOW:

This production seeks to inspire young people to learn about incredible women who have sometimes been left out of the history book. These women have changed the world and our country in incredible ways.

Pics: Ida B. Wells (Above) L to R: Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Harriet Tubman



● www.brightstartheatre.com ●

Pictured Right:

Madam CJ Walker, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary McLeod Bethune

Why Should We Learn About These Women?

Learning about history is like opening a treasure chest full of amazing stories.

Understanding Our World

Black women have made big contributions to our world in science, art, sports, and more. People like Dorothy Vaughan helped send astronauts to space, and Ella Fitzgerald's music brought joy to many. Knowing their stories helps us understand how our world was shaped.

Promoting Equality

Learning about Black women from history helps us see the importance of equality and fairness. These women fought for their rights and the rights of others, showing us that everyone deserves to be treated equally. This can inspire us to make our world a better place.

Celebrating Diversity

Our world is full of different cultures and backgrounds. By learning about the diverse experiences and achievements of Black women, we celebrate the rich tapestry of human history. This helps us appreciate and respect each other more.



Meet SOME of the STARS of the Show:

Harriet Tubman (1822–1913)

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery but escaped to freedom. She became a hero by helping other enslaved people escape through the Underground Railroad. She was brave and never gave up, showing us the importance of courage and helping others.

Sojourner Truth (1797–1883)

Sojourner Truth was also born into slavery but gained her freedom. She became a famous speaker, fighting for the rights of Black people and women. Her powerful speeches, like "Ain't I a Woman?" inspired many people to join the fight for equality.

Rosa Parks (1913–2005)

Rosa Parks is known as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." In 1955, she refused to give up her bus seat to a white person, which helped start the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Her actions showed the world that everyone should be treated equally, no matter the color of their skin.

Maya Angelou (1928–2014)

Maya Angelou was a talented writer, poet, and actress. She wrote books and poems that shared her experiences and thoughts on life. Her work inspires people to be strong and find their voices. One of her most famous books is "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875–1955)

Mary McLeod Bethune was an educator and civil rights leader who started a school for African American girls. She believed in the power of education and worked hard to improve opportunities for Black students. Her efforts helped pave the way for equal education for all.

Dorothy Vaughan (1910–2008)

Dorothy Vaughan was a brilliant mathematician who worked at NASA. She was one of the "Hidden Figures" who helped send astronauts to space. Dorothy became NASA's first African American manager, showing how important diversity is in science and technology.

Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996)

Ella Fitzgerald, known as the "First Lady of Song," was a legendary jazz singer. Her beautiful voice and incredible talent won her 13 Grammy Awards and made her one of the best-loved musicians of all time. Ella's music continues to inspire people around the world.



L-R: Ella Fitzgerald,
Sojourner Truth,
Michelle Obama

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Community Engagement

- Encourage students to research local black women who have made significant contributions to their community.
- Develop a project where students interview these women or their families to create a multimedia presentation (video, podcast, or written profile).
- Showcase these stories to celebrate local heroes and their impact.

The Power of Speech

Ask students to write a monologue or short story expressing the challenges and triumphs of their chosen figure. Think about how to write in their voice, and who they may be speaking to. Many of these women used their voices in a variety of ways. What makes your figure unique in how she used hers?

Paint Her History

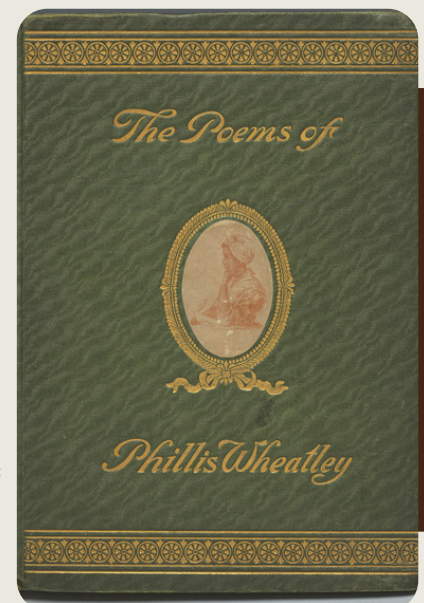
Have students create artwork inspired by black women in history. This could include portraits, murals, or sculptures that represent their contributions or capture their essence.

Create a Timeline

Create a timeline on a bulletin board or digitally.

Assign different time periods to groups of students (e.g., Civil Rights Era, 19th century abolitionist movements, modern activism).

Each group researches and adds key achievements and contributions of black women during their assigned period to the timeline, discussing why these were significant.



“If there's one thing I've learned in life, it's the power of using your voice.”

-Michelle Obama



Musically Memorable

Discuss Black female musicians, dancers, or composers who have made significant contributions. There are many eras to choose from, do not limit yourself to just one. Many contemporary artists are pushing boundaries just as much as the women from decades prior.

Listen to their music, learn traditional dances, or even create music inspired by their work.

In the space below (or on a separate sheet of paper) write a review of the performance you just saw. What were your favorite parts? Who did you think was incredible in their role? How did the performance make you feel?

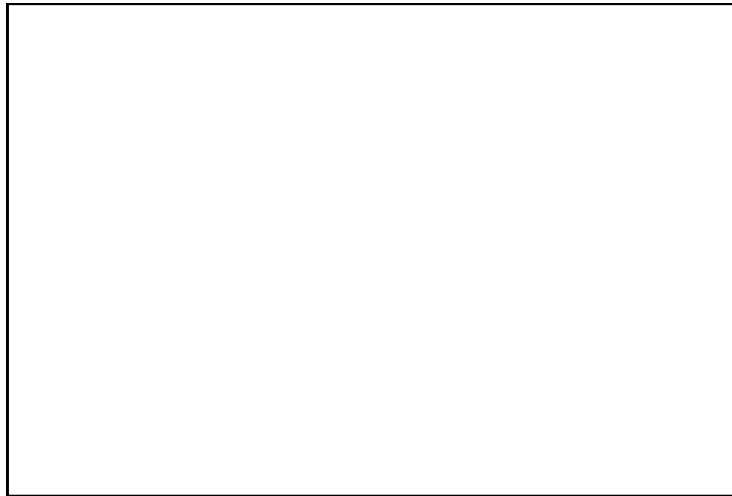
LETS REVIEW

THE PLAY

TODAY PRICELESS

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF TODAY'S PERFORMANCE

DRAW YOUR FAVORITE HISTORICAL FIGURE FROM THE SHOW IN THE BOX BELOW AND WRITE ABOUT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS



IF YOU COULD LIVE IN ANY TIME IN HISTORY WHERE WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE AND WHY?

How did the performance make you feel? Has your perspective on anything changed?

Behind The Scenes of Our Theatre



We travel the country in mini vans!

WHO ON EARTH IS BRIGHT STAR THEATRE?

Founded in 2003, Bright Star tours with a number of shows each season, from anti-bullying and STEM to Black History, and everything in between. The company strives to make professional theatre as accessible as possible with affordable pricing and quality shows.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve your young audience and hope you found the show and actors pleasant and enjoyable. We hope to make theatre a part of every young person's life!

THEATRE DEFINITIONS

Actors: The people on stage that perform the play.

Backdrop: The background for the play.

Props: Anything that an actor holds while on stage--a cane, book or rubber chicken.

Downstage: the area closest to the audience -- a long time ago stages were built at angles.

Upstage: The area away from the audience-- like the back wall of a stage.

Director: The person who tells the actors where to go while they are on-stage and helped them create the characters they would play.

Costumes: The wigs, clothing and glasses that the actors wear to help flesh out their characters.

Auditions: How an actor gets a role is by auditioning. They may have to interview, pretend to be a character from the play, read something from it, etc.

Set designer: The person who decides what should be on the background and who paints or creates it.

CONTACT US ANYTIME

Connect with us anytime! We love receiving feedback, thank you cards, pictures and whatever else from you and your students.

The best way to contact us is to send an email to booking@brightstartheatre.com

Our actors average around 1,000 miles a week traveling the country to entertain young audiences.

Our company was founded in 2003 and is owned by an Emmy winning Actor.

Our programs have been seen around the country and across the world!