

BLACK ON THE PRAIRIES

Written by
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Teacher Guide

Black on the Prairies – Teacher Guide

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About the authors

Sarah Adomako-Ansah is an Edmontonian with Ghanaian heritage. She proudly resides on Treaty 6 Territory. Sarah is a teacher with the Edmonton Catholic School Division; her Bachelor of Education is from the University of Alberta (2013). From 2013 to 2021, she has worked at the same school, teaching in grades 3 through 6. For the 2021-2022 school year, she is on secondment and has taken on the role of Educator in Residence at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Sarah is passionate about diversity, leadership, representation, and technology. Sarah is the co-founder of the Black Teacher’s Association of Alberta and strives to amplify all voices and create representation in all schools.

Natasha Joachim is an artist, activist, and educator with the Calgary Catholic School District. She is a first generation Canadian of Trinidadian heritage and hails from southern Alberta, Treaty 7 Territory. For over 16 years, Natasha has been mentoring and empowering youth through the arts. She has been published in numerous university publications, written/directed large ensemble productions, and been nominated for several awards such as the Women of Distinction and the Edwin Parr Teacher Excellence. Passionate about teaching and creating theatre for social change, Natasha continues to be involved with projects that speak to her passions. A co-founder of Ellipsis Tree Collective, Alberta's first Afrocentric performance society dedicated to the professional development and production of creative works by BIPOC Artists, as well as a co-founder of Braided Arrows on Instagram – an account created by two Black and Indigenous female educators to provide a safe space to hold passionate discussions about culture, identity, and anti-racism.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The CBC project *Black on the Prairies* began with a conversation among colleagues about shared histories and soon revealed a mutual desire to share the fullness of Black life on the Prairies. This is not just Black history. This is Canadian history. Having a deeper understanding of all of the diverse Prairie history allows us to have a better understanding of ourselves as Canadians.

Black on the Prairies is a multimedia presentation of articles, essays, stories, audio, music and poetry that will take you on an exploration of Black life on the Prairies; past, present and future. Never before have these stories been more vital and urgent. In light of the United Nations Declaration of the International Decade for People of African Descent, now more than ever, the world is calling for a deeper and more unbiased understanding of Black experiences.

So, what does it mean to be **Black on the Prairies**?

It is impossible to limit this to one universal definition. The Black experience is different for each individual Black person; elders, adults, youth and children. Knowing our past is what helps us understand our present and change our future, for the better.

Black on the Prairies is a brilliant look at past, present and future Black life in our Prairie provinces; Alberta, Saskatchewan and

Our teacher guide will help you and your students explore the [Black on the Prairies](#) website.

Also check out Curio's *Black on the Prairies* video lineup at www.curio.ca/black-on-the-prairies

Manitoba. It's an effort to amplify and display the complexity of Black life across the Prairies through five themes.

1. **Migration**
2. **Putting in Work**
3. **Black and Indigenous Relations**
4. **Politics and Resistance**
5. **Black to the Future**

You can expect to travel through the Plains and learn more about the arrival of Black settlers, our relationship with Turtle Island's Indigenous population, our role in politics, and how we are setting up the younger generation for the future.

Black Canadians have been in Canada for over 400 years, and on the Prairies for over 200 years. To be Black on the Prairies is to be part of a colonial legacy that begins on the ancestral lands of the First Nations and Métis people of this region. We hope to shed some light on Black and Indigenous people's shared history and ongoing relationship, as well as solidarity with one another.

Curriculum Connections

PRIMARY

English Language Arts

K-3

Share ideas and experiences, relate to others, and make sense of themselves and the world. Comprehend and respond to a variety of texts by Black authors that address identity, culture, community and social responsibility. Investigate important issues and advocate for themselves, their communities and the environment.

4-6

Explore, analyze and respond to a variety of texts on Black & Indigenous history, identity, experiences, community and culture, by Black and Indigenous authors, including oral traditions.

Social Studies

K-3

Develop an understanding of Prairie geography, history and culture to better understand Black people's relationship to the land, their sense of belonging, identity and diversity.

Understand people's rights and responsibilities in relation to their own. Explore ways of life in Black communities, past and present and gain an appreciation of their contributions to Canada and the world.

4-6

Examine Prairie geography, Black history and culture to better understand people's relationship to the land, their sense of belonging, identity and diversity. Explore the region through the experiences of Indigenous peoples and Black settlers. Learn about Black settlements and the contributions of early Black pioneers. Understand patterns of migration and the impact of restrictive immigration policies in Canadian history.

Understand the rights and responsibilities of others. Examine the relationship between an individual's power and authority and the power and authority of others.

The Arts

K-6

Explore art, dance, drama and music to make connections, observe, create and understand relationships between identity, place, culture, society and belonging. Explore your own, as well as various Black Canadian cultural traditions.

SECONDARY

English Language Arts

7-9

View, listen to, read, comprehend and respond to a variety of Black and Indigenous texts that address identity, social responsibility and efficacy. Critically analyze and interpret oral, traditional and contemporary texts from Black and Indigenous perspectives to better understand and evaluate the author's purpose, message, point of view, craft, values, biases, stereotypes, and/or prejudices. Acknowledge the value of others' ideas and opinions in exploring and extending personal interpretations and viewpoints.

10-12

Analyze and respond to a variety of texts that relate to Black identity, cultural and societal issues in Canadian and global contexts. Invite diverse and challenging ideas and opinions through a variety of means [such as listening actively, reserving judgement, asking clarifying questions, etc.] to facilitate the re-examination of one's own ideas and positions.

Investigate various means by which language and image are used appropriately to honour Black people and to celebrate Black historical and cultural events; explain how these means of using language and image help to build community [for

example, heritage day, wall of honour or photography exhibit, naming ceremonies, religious ceremonies, prayers and land acknowledgements of First Nations and Indigenous peoples].

Social Studies

7-9

Investigate how Black people and Black historical events in Canada have helped shape citizenship, identity and Canada's development into a multicultural society. Learn about sustainable Black settlements, their way of governing including their acquisition and distribution of power, resources and wealth. Explore different worldviews and understand the rights and responsibilities of others. Value the contributions of Black Canadians whose social and political actions have promoted human rights and helped shape Canadian society. Describe social and cultural injustices in Canada's past, the effects of stereotyping and discrimination on Black individuals, communities and regions.

10-12

Learn about the changing meaning of Black identity, culture and citizenship in a globalizing world, while also understanding the impacts of globalization, both positive and negative, on Black people worldwide. Explore Black people's relationship with their social and physical landscapes. Investigate anti-Black racism in Canada, historical and current relationships with Black people, discriminatory policies and effects of marginalization. Analyze economics, law and order, equitable access to jobs and opportunities, human rights violations and social justice activism.

History

10-12

Study Black Canadian History from the late 1800s to present. Learn about past and present social issues, migration, citizenship and Black sustainable communities. Explore Black people's relationship to the land and Canadian society. Learn about past and present social issues, migration, citizenship and Black sustainable communities. Understand the history of emancipation and Black contributions to Canadian society. Explore how Black people have helped shape Canadian identity and culture. Investigate the continuing impact of colonialism, discriminatory policies and systemic racism.

The Arts

7-9

Explore Art, Dance, Drama and Music to make connections, observe, create and understand how an artists' work reflects relationships between identity, place, culture, society and belonging. Explore your own, as well as various Black Canadian cultural traditions.

10-12

Explore art, dance, drama and music to make connections, analyze, create, understand and respond to the work of others. Learn how Black artists' response to history and complex relationships between identity, place, culture, society and belonging is reflected in their work.

Glossary

Advocacy & Motivating Change: Advocacy is a [political process](#) started by an individual or [group](#) with the goal to [influence](#) decisions within [political](#), [economic](#) and social systems. The motivating factor for change and advocacy is usually inequality or injustice. An essential misperception to come to terms with is that advocating for change at this time in history is being done only to the benefit of people with racialized identities. We ALL have the potential to benefit from economic and social policy changes.

Ally: To be an ally means that someone is associated with another as a helper. An ally is a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity or struggle.

Anti-Blackness: Anti-blackness is the name for the specific kind of racial prejudice directed towards Black people.

Anti-racism: Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviors and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. Anti-racism is rooted in action. It is about taking steps to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional and structural levels. It is not a new concept, but the Black Lives Matter movement has helped increase the focus on the importance of anti-racism.

Bias: Bias is a tendency to prefer one person or thing to another, and to favor that person or thing. Implicit biases are influenced by experiences, although these attitudes may not be the result of direct personal experience.

Cultural conditioning, media portrayals and upbringing can all contribute to the implicit associations that people form about the members of other social groups.

Colonist Migration: This refers to large-scale population movements where the migrants maintain strong links with their or their ancestors' former country, gaining significant privileges over other inhabitants of the territory by such links.

Colourism: Colourism is prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. In instances of colourism, differential treatment based on skin colour takes place. This is especially seen with favoritism toward those with a lighter skin tone and mistreatment or exclusion of those with a darker skin tone.

Diaspora: The term diaspora comes from an ancient Greek word meaning “to scatter about.” And that's exactly what the people of a diaspora do – they scatter from their homeland to places across the globe, spreading their culture as they go.

Erasure: Erasure is the gradual removal of various traditions and customs from society. The process of cultural erasure is gradual as the practices of racialized groups slowly go from being commonplace to being rare in everyday life.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.

Jim Crow laws: Jim Crow laws were state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States and elsewhere within the United States

Melanin: Melanin is a dark brown to black pigment occurring in the hair, skin and iris of the eye in people and animals. It is responsible for tanning of skin exposed to sunlight.

Macroaggression: Macroaggressions are large scale or overt aggression toward those of another race, culture, gender, etc.

Microaggression: Microaggressions are more than just insults, insensitive comments, or generalized disrespectful behavior. They're something very specific: the kinds of remarks, questions, or actions that are painful because they have to do with a person's membership in a group that's discriminated against.

Order-in-Council P.C. 1324: On August 12, 1911, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier signed and approved the order-in-council to ban Black persons from entering Canada for a period of one year. This was a culmination of “diplomatic racism” which justified the ban based on the notion that “the Negroe race...is deemed unsuitable for the climate and requirements of Canada.”

Race: The phrase “race is a social construct” is one that we hear and see a lot these days. Race is a concept developed during colonization that has no basis in biology or science. People are unaware of the history of the [development of racial categories](#). The idea of race, and racial categories, is something that was created by white people to benefit others who looked like them, and to justify prevalent ideas during colonial times – like slavery and genocide. It

was also used to justify the implementation of policies that uphold systemic racism, like the Indian Act, that still exist to this day.

Racism: Conversations about race and racism are uncomfortable to have with children but are essential in order to facilitate understanding of race, racism and bias. Children as young as age four are exposed to and begin to develop their own racial bias. Racism is the belief that white people have natural superiority to people of colour. It leads to [prejudice](#) and [discrimination](#) against Black, Indigenous or People of Colour (BIPOCs) because they are of a different race or [ethnicity](#). Racism can also be used to describe policies and systems that have been put in place as a result of these beliefs.

Settler: A settler is a person who settles or stays in a new county, region or area. The Indigenous author and scholar Daniel Heath Justice points out the importance of naming settlers within the context of Canada’s history, and especially acknowledging that “under settler colonialism the arrival of so many communities has ensured that Indigenous peoples have lost land.” (Source: “[Daniel Heath Justice defines the divisive term 'settler.'](#)” *Unreserved, CBC Radio*)

Skin Colour: Every single person has a unique skin tone. Parents are constantly identifying differences in their environments with young children: a blue bird, a red sign, a pink flower. But they will avoid these conversations when it comes to differences children point out in race or other aspects of physical appearance. This has the unintended consequence of making children believe that our differences are bad. Families can promote diversity by openly talking with their children about how all of our differences make us unique and special. They are an essential part of who we are.

Acknowledging people's backgrounds and life experiences will help them to feel appreciated and valued. Introduce different skin colours during play time when you may already be talking about physical attributes like size, shape and colour.

Stereotypes and Prejudice: A stereotype is an idea that people have about a group, usually based upon how that group looks on the outside. This idea may be untrue or only partially true. The word prejudice comes from two Latin words, “pre” and “judice” that mean “before” and “judge.” So, it basically means to judge someone before you get to know about them. Stereotyping is a form of prejudice because what you see on the outside of a person is only a small part of who that person really is.

Systemic Racism: Systemic racism describes what happens when cultural institutions and systems reflect individual racism. In a country like Canada with a long history of colonization, institutional policies and practices have been created to give advantages to white people and create barriers for BIPOC people. As a society we uphold inequality by refusing to question the policies and practices within our institutions, who they benefit and who they leave out. Systemic racism can show up in employment, education, justice, health care and many other areas.

White Colonial Gaze: The white gaze or white colonial gaze refers to the white supremacist lens in which white people view, define, limit, stereotype and judge racialized groups.

White Privilege: White privilege is a concept that highlights the unfair societal advantages that white people especially white males, have

over non-white people. It is something that is pervasive throughout society and exists in all of the major systems and institutions that operate in society, as well as on an interpersonal level.

White Supremacy: White supremacy is the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups.

Whitewashing: White washing is a metaphor that refers to the intentional attempts to conceal incriminating or unpleasant facts about someone or something. In the context of ‘whitewashing’ Black History, this refers to the attempts to edit out, gloss over or cover up crimes and scandals, while upholding white supremacy and colonial structures. This process often exonerates the guilty and perpetuates stereotypes by presenting biased data through the white colonial gaze.

Themes

1. MIGRATION

“We explore the arrivals, and movement, of Black people across the Prairies.”

Crossing Boundaries

Over two hundred years ago, the Prairies saw the first Black residents. As part of that history, the five major self-sustaining, all Black communities of Amber Valley, Wildwood, Campsie, Breton, Maidstone were founded in the early 1900s.

Established in 1910, Amber Valley became the largest and most prosperous Black community in all of Western Canada. At its height it had approximately 300 hundred residents who arrived as part of the era of colonist migration. Henry Sneed, a Baptist minister, led almost 200 African Americans from the Deep Southern states of Oklahoma, Arkansas & Texas to Amber Valley. Most came from Oklahoma, where small settlements of freed slaves had taken root after the American Civil War. Sneed had sought out a Northern Haven for families in his church to leave behind racially segregated Jim Crow America. He believed he found that in Northern Alberta. In 1911, families from Sneed’s church embarked on the permanent migration to escape the racism and oppression they had faced in the Southern States. In Amber Valley, the residents successfully built a warm, thriving community with a schoolhouse and a church.

However, five months after Sneed and his party arrived, there were efforts to stop Black migration to Canada. A group of angry white residents from Edmonton circulated a petition to rid themselves of what they called the “Negro Immigration problem.” Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier signed an order “prohibiting for one year the landing in Canada of any immigrant belonging to the ‘Negro race’, which is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada.” The Canadian



Ron Mapp is a descendant of Henry Sneed, who led hundreds of African Americans to Amber Valley, Alberta. (Stefan Legacy)

government even went as far as to send emissaries to the U.S. to discourage Blacks from moving to Canada. After the prime minister signed his order in 1912, migration from the southern U.S. slowed down.

In 2021, Canada Post honored Sneed & Amber Valley with a stamp. By telling the story of those who founded Amber Valley, we celebrate Black history and Canada’s history, and pay tribute to the remarkable power of the human spirit. Today, the Prairies have the fastest growing Black population in all of Canada. In the last 20 years, the Black population has grown fivefold in Alberta, more than tripled in Saskatchewan, and almost tripled in Manitoba.

Check out:

Article: [Crossing Boundaries](#) (Omayra Issa, CBC News)

Video: [Exploring Black history on Canada's Prairies](#) (The National)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Before learning about Black migration, were you aware that the Prairies had self-sustaining all-Black communities beginning in the early 1900s?
2. Why do you think Edmontonians viewed “Negro” immigration as a problem?

❖ Activities

1. Retell the journey of the Black migrants to any of the original Black settlements. You can present this in any way you choose (ex. picture book, comic, radio play, animation etc.).
2. Compare and contrast the largest Western all-Black community (Amber Valley) to the oldest Black community in Canada (Africville). Come up with a creative way to demonstrate through writing, drawing, photographic essay, poetry, music, etc.
 - a. How were they similar?
 - b. How were they different?
 - c. How were the residents able to preserve their community?
 - d. How have the communities changed from past to present?
 - e. What was life like for the residents?
 - f. What adversity did the residents have to overcome?

----- The Only Black Kid



David Bowers (left) and Baptist Abushaka bonded over their shared experiences growing up Black in small Alberta towns. (Tahirih Foroozan/CBC)

Baptist Abushaka and David Bowers grew up in separate towns but shared a lot of the same experiences growing up – one of which is being the only Black person in a small town. Abushaka has fond memories growing up in a small town

and said he didn't really think about race as a child. He grew up playing hockey in High River and the love of sport helped his non-Black teammates to see past the colour of his skin and focus more about what they had in common. Abushaka excelled at sports and met David Bowers at a track meet. They bonded over their similar backgrounds and shared experiences. Abushaka is proud of his Prairie life experience which has helped shape him into who he is today. He wants to move to a larger city that has a strong Black community and a place where he can belong. Bowers has also considered Toronto but is hopeful about the changes and growth in Okotoks and Calgary.

Check out:

Article: [The Only Black Kid](#) (Tahirih Foroozan, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Question

Like Baptist and David, has there ever been a time where you felt that you didn't fully belong?

❖ Activity

Create a visual art piece, poem, song, dance or dramatic scene that captures how your physical landscape and social environment has shaped who you are today.

----- The Whitewashing of Prairie History

Karina Vernon, associate professor of English at the University of Toronto, believes that if we don't know our past, we can't understand our present. Originally from Olds, Alberta, she grew up never even hearing about Amber Valley. She also never heard or read about any of the other self-sustaining, all-Black communities founded by the approximately 1,600 African-Americans who moved to the Canadian Prairies at the turn of the



*Karina Vernon as a young girl growing up in Olds, Alta.
(Submitted by Karina Vernon)*

20th century. Vernon says these gaping holes in her knowledge and the sanitized version of Prairie history we receive today, demonstrates how the Prairie's historical record is vulnerable to whitewashing. She warns that all of us are deprived when the full complexity of our collective history is denied. It cheats us of a full understanding of our own present moment. Not only that, Vernon insists that restoring Black history will help us understand the ways the Prairies have long been a site of struggle for Black freedom.

Check out:

Article: [The Whitewashing of Prairie History](#)
(Karina Vernon, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Question

Reflect on what you know about your own local Black history.

❖ Activity

Choose one of the following articles from the Migration section of the [Black on the Prairies](#) website: **Crossing Boundaries**, **The Only Black Kid**, or **Whitewashing of Prairie History** and share something you have learned about the history and contributions of Black people on the Prairies.

Here are some focus questions to consider during your research:

1. What were their contributions?
2. What problems did they face?
3. What obstacles did they overcome?
4. What good did they do for others?
5. Other background/interesting information.

Black Prairie by the Numbers

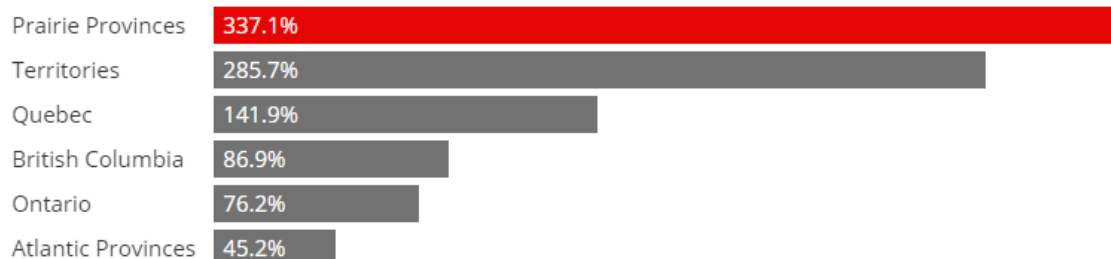
For the past 20 years, the Canadian Prairies have had the fastest growing Black population. Nationally, in 2016, more than 1.2 million people in Canada identified as Black. This means that, with a Black population of about 175,000, the Prairie provinces were home to 14.6 percent of the country's Black population. In 2016, the vast majority (129,390) were in Alberta, followed by Manitoba (30,340) and Saskatchewan (14,925). Alberta's Black population, in particular, has continued to grow exponentially. In 1996, the province's Black population stood at slightly less than 25,000. By 2016, the Black population had grown fivefold to nearly 130,000. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have the country's third and fourth highest Black population growth rates, respectively, ranking lower than only Alberta and the Territories.

About two-thirds of Black people on the Prairies are first generation, with many arriving from the African continent. However, Black presence on the Prairies is believed to stretch back as far as the 18th century and can be characterized by four major waves of migration:

- **Fur Trade: late 1800s - early 1900s**
- **Homesteaders from Oklahoma, Texas and other Southern States: 1905-1911**
- **Loosening of racial restrictions in the 1950s saw more migration from the Caribbean, Africa and the Americas**
- **Temporary foreign workers & asylum seekers, mostly from East Africa, Central America and South America**

Black population growth rate by province (1996-2016)

Canada



Prairie Provinces



CBC NEWS

Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

The growth rate has increased from census to census, and is mainly attributed to more recent waves of immigration from African countries, according to Statistics Canada.

In addition to those born in Canada, the top places of birth are Nigeria, Ethiopia, Jamaica and Somalia. There are higher concentrations of Black residents in some of the largest cities: Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg. Regina comes in below the national average at 2.2 per cent. However, the highest percentage of Black residents can be found in Brooks, a small town in Alberta. In terms of faith, Black people on the Prairies are mostly Christian (70%) and the second largest religion is Islam. Although most speak English at home (with a growing number speaking French), Somali is the most spoken language in Black households. Finally, Nigerians make up the largest African diaspora community on the Prairies.

Check out:

Article: [Black Prairie by the Numbers](#)
(Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. From the statistics you read above, what stood out to you? Which statistic was the most surprising?
2. Why do you think the number of French-speaking Black households is increasing?

❖ Activities

1. Create a timeline for the waves of migration.
2. Create a visual representation that illustrates the makeup of where Black residents live, their faith, where they were born and what language they speak.

Reflections on Black Prairie Life

Fifteen voices from all over the Prairies ranging in age, gender and identity, share their individual and yet often similar experiences on how the physical, social and cultural landscapes have helped to shape who they are. They are: Amara &

Sheena Brown (mother and daughter from Yorkton, Saskatchewan), Esi Edugyan (a best-selling author from Calgary), Jesse Lipscombe (actor, activist and descendant of Amber Valley from Edmonton), Dionne C. Haynes (Winnipeg), Keisha Erwin (of Black and Cree heritage, living in Saskatchewan), Pamela Parker (a model, descendent of Black homesteaders, currently living in New York City), Ismaila Alfa (Host of Metro Morning in Toronto), Markus Chambers (the first Black man elected to Winnipeg's city council in 2018), Lindiwe Mpofu (residing in Saskatoon), Kaie Kellough (formerly from Calgary, currently living in Montreal), Yalonda Saunders (a descendant of Black Albertan settlers from Oklahoma), Nampane Londe (living in Winnipeg), Tina 'QueenTite' Opaleke (residing in Manitoba), and Elliott Walsh (a hip-hop educator and artist from Winnipeg).



Check out:

Article: [Reflections on Black Prairie Life](#) (Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

Podcast: [Reflections on Black Prairie life: the good, the bad and the esoteric](#) (Omayra Issa, Ify Chiwetelu, Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Having listened to this range of voices, do you relate to one of these perspectives of the Prairies more than others? If so, why? Explain.

❖ Activities

1. What have been your own experiences growing up on the Prairies? Share your story in any way you choose.
2. Of the reflections shown, which one do you relate to most? Record a video discussing how your cultural and life experience relates to the individual of your choosing.

Arrival

An award-winning Nigerian-Canadian poet living in Edmonton, Titilope Sonuga wrote an Ode to Black Prairie women. In her poem, she captures the complex history and journey of Black migrants. Referencing her ancestors, her stolen people arrive in a stolen land with hopes and dreams for a better future. Seeking refuge and a place to call home, they found their place on the Prairies in Campsie, Breton, Clearview, Amber Valley, Maidstone and Wildwood. The rich history of these communities has been purposefully forgotten – an erasure of Blackness from Prairie history. She speaks with such soulful eloquence that encapsulates the deep connection of her ancestors to the land, their resilience and fighting spirit.

Check out:**Titilope Sonuga's poem:**[Arrival: An ode to Black Prairie women](#)**❖ Discussion Questions:**

1. What stood out or shocked you?
2. What did you learn?

❖ Activities

1. Using this poem as a mentor text, mimic the style of Sonuga's Ode and create your own version about your own ancestor's journey to Canada.
2. Tell your ancestors story by creating a picture book, comic, song, play etc.

“We honour what
remains,
the wild push and pull that
gathers us here,
our Blackness blooming
against the backdrop of a
staggering white.”

– from the poem “Arrival: An ode to Black
Prairie women” by Titilope Sonuga



Titilope Sonuga

2. PUTTING IN WORK

We highlight the contributions and impact of Black people in the workforce of the Prairies.

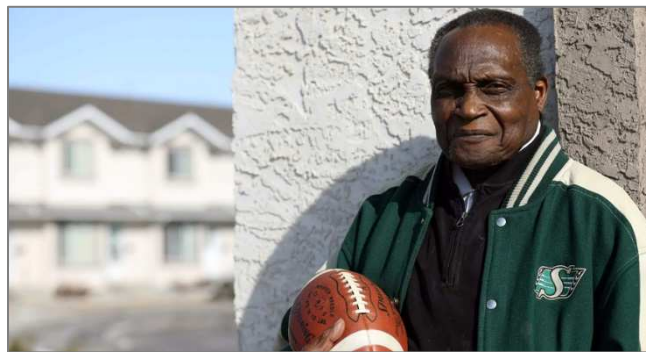
Race to Touchdown

Former Saskatchewan Roughriders running back, George Reed, was born on October 2, 1939 to Maggie and George Reed Sr. They lived in the ‘coloured’ section of Vicksburg, Mississippi in the 1930s. Segregation, enforced by the justice system and the Ku Klux Klan, maintained the racist social and economic hierarchy. When George was young, the Reed family packed up and left for Seattle. He recalls living in Seattle as a time filled with diversity and with no overt racism. After playing college football and being named to the national all-star team, George saw interest from NFL teams. He opted for the Saskatchewan Roughriders in hopes of finding an inclusive environment and moved to Canada in 1963.

He quickly saw, however, that Canada wasn’t quite as advertised. George had many difficulties renting living quarters in Regina. He was constantly told that the vacancies he applied for had ‘just been rented’ as an attempt to keep him out of their buildings based on the colour of his skin. He was forced to live in and out of hotels because people wouldn’t rent to a Black man.

“Everybody closes their eyes in Canada and then they don’t understand how we can talk about racial discrimination in this country.”

– George Reed
(in the *Toronto Telegram*, 1967)



George Reed still lives in Regina, where he made his name as a Saskatchewan Roughrider. (Kirk Fraser/CBC)

As well, he experienced racism within the Roughriders organization. Some players refused to shower while he was in the dressing room. He received prank calls from people pretending to be KKK members. There was even a cap on how many Black players could play per team in the CFL, which, at the time, was four or five.

Despite all this, George was the highest scoring player in the 1960s and 1970s, he was named the CFL’s Most Outstanding Player in 1965, and the Grey Cup MVP in 1966. Suddenly, because he was ‘somebody,’ he was recognized and celebrated. It wasn’t about colour anymore.

In addition to helping the Roughriders franchise, George Reed founded the Special Olympics in Saskatchewan and became the head of the CFL Players Union. He secured pay increases and medical coverage for all players.

In 1976, he retired from the sport. George’s impact in and out of the sport is inspiring to Black athletes and has helped, specifically those in his home province, evolve and advocate.

“It is to me embarrassing that we’re still having this talk on racism” said Janelle Joseph, the author of *Race and Sport in Canada*. She said the Reed family “sets an example for all Canadians on how to give back to, and build, community. Although it may be painful to look back, I encourage us all to learn from the past so we can challenge the myth of Canada as having always been inclusive.”

Check out:

Article: [Race to Touchdown](#) (Jason Warick, CBC News)

Podcast: [CFL legend George Reed on sports, race and leaving a legacy](#) (Melissa Fundira, Omayra Issa, Jason Warick, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite sport?
2. Who is your favourite athlete and how do they culturally identify?
3. Why is it important for athletes to speak up against non-sport issues?
4. As a Black athlete, in the past, what barriers have they had to overcome? Are these barriers still in place today?

❖ Activities

1. Research your favourite athlete. What are three important things people need to know about them outside of their sport? For example, do they champion any causes? Are they an advocate for their community? Do they give back in some way? Document your findings using the presentation tool of your choice.
2. Create a timeline of Canadian Black athletes, beginning from 1900 until today. Ensure that you have a minimum of ten athletes from a variety of sports. Identify some of their greatest achievements and also include any causes the athletes support.
3. Research a Black athlete that was the “first” in their sport. What obstacles did they have to overcome? What barriers did they face? Do modern day Black athletes today face the same challenges as these trailblazers did in the past?

Designing While Black

In the 21st century, Black people are still being placed into boxes and reduced to stereotypes of the Black simpleton, servant, criminal and entertainer. The long legacy of Black scientists, entrepreneurs and designers does not simply go unnoticed. Some may find it hard to believe their range of accomplishments because it threatens to take Black people out of the well constructed boxes they have been placed into.

Take Green Walters for instance, when he arrived in Alberta in 1881, as an uneducated man, he took a stab at any job he could find. Walters had many jobs: a hay contractor, a ranch hand, a cook, a servant and a cleaner. In some of these roles, his skills were considered less than desirable. Yet that was overlooked because he was such an excellent entertainer often singing plantation and minstrel songs and keeping everyone in ‘stitches.’

By today’s standards Walter would have been considered a ‘Serial Entrepreneur.’ Yet Walter’s success was not based on his skillset on the job, but rather his ability to strategically use humor to make white people more comfortable in his presence. He was a master at playing the role of the ‘Black performer’ which even 120 years ago, was an established and welcome stereotype.

Tosin Odugbemi, a Harvard-educated visual designer from Edmonton believes that Black people have been put into a box and have been viewed as aggressive and simple for years. Odugbemi explains that Black people’s “value has been reduced to existing only to make white people's lives more enjoyable.” In her work she exposes the white Prairie gaze and challenges the stereotypes placed upon racialized people.

Bertrand Bickersteth an Albertan professor and writer poses the question: “Why is it so hard to see Black braininess or the Black designing mind?” Using the example of Black Engineer

Oliver Bowen, Bickersteth talks about how little Mr. Bowen is known for being the Black engineer responsible for designing the Calgary C-Train.

Bowen, a descendent of Amber Valley was a precocious thinker and had a mind for design at an early age. Eventually, Mr. Bowen entered the field of engineering. He was responsible for the original line from Eighth Street station downtown to Anderson station in the city's southwest.

Another notable pioneer of design is the legendary John Ware – the best cowboy in the west. The brand “Four Walking Sticks,” belonged to him. Its meaning is unknown, though many have speculated. Hugh Rookwood’s opinion is that the symbols are for Ware’s business: the four legs of his cattle.

According to historian Cheryl Foggo, Ware, despite his success, “is one of those famous people no one has really heard of, especially outside of Alberta.” Ware has had buildings and landmarks named after him, he pioneered irrigation in Southern Alberta, and he was “the fastest, the strongest, the best.” Ware’s brand, numerous patents and inventions boast of a brilliant and astute mind capable of pushing past the muck of racism and anti-Blackness in the 19th century to “transcend race, become a successful rancher and beloved icon.”

Check out:

Article: [Designing While Black: Exploring the Evolution of the Black Prairie Design Aesthetic](#) (Bertrand Bickersteth, CBC News)

Video: [John Ware Reclaimed](#) (Cheryl Foggo, NFB)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Who is a famous Black designer, creator, or influencer that interests you?

2. What is the significance of Oliver Bowen’s life and why is it important to Calgarians?

❖ Activities

1. Using a Venn diagram, compare a Black designer, creator, or influencer’s aspirations to yours. What is a similarity you share? Are there any differences?
2. Who was John Ware? What did he invent and/or contribute to Alberta’s ranching legacy? Share your findings in any way you choose.
3. Create a blueprint for something that doesn’t yet exist but would make society better.

“Why is it so hard to see Black braininess? Or the Black designing mind?”

– Bertrand Bickersteth

Prairie Firsts

Across the Prairies, there are many notable and melanated firsts in several fields: education, modelling, athletics, human rights, law enforcement and religion. As you learn about these incredible people, make a mental note of some of the true trials and tribulations that they experienced to get to this place of Black excellence.

Rosalind Smith was Edmonton’s first Black female principal. She was a principal in Edmonton Public Schools in 1996. Growing up in the school system, she experienced racism from school staff and students. By entering the profession, she was making a decision to make things right for the next generation of Black students. From 1996 until 2007, she was a principal in several schools, and continued to rise



Rosalind Smith

by moving into a consultant position in the field of diversity and equity training for district leaders. In 2015, she retired, but many Black teachers still look up to her and aspire to be her. Ms. Smith said that her vision and leadership helped her to see that the existing school cultures needed to change to prepare for the burgeoning and diverse community on the horizon.

Pamela Parker was Canada's first Black international model. She has been in the industry for nearly 50 years. The ad that she is most famous for is her 1976 GWG denim campaign. It was slightly controversial, because she was pictured topless in the jeans. The ad was censored in Canada and they made GWG paint a shirt onto Parker's body. The ad brought her notoriety and attention with her image appearing on the back of every pair of GWG jeans across the country.

In October 2018, the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton created an exhibit about GWG. The



Pamela Parker

“I had teachers who were blatantly racist... And I thought that maybe if I became a teacher I could do some things differently.”

– Rosalind Smith

museum blew up the iconic photo of Parker to 20 feet tall and suspended it from the ceiling. “When your dream is to do something – anything – then it will make you a happier person for your life. And you will age well,” Parker said. “You’ll be healthier, you’ll be happier, you’ll enjoy your life better. So do what your heart desires, as long as it helps people.”



Carol Lafayette-Boyd

Carol Lafayette-Boyd was the first champion Masters athlete of African descent. She is 75 years young and is from Saskatchewan. She is both a basketball player and a track athlete. She didn't start competing in the Canadian Masters Games until 1992, when she was 50 years old, after she found out the competition would be held in Regina. She immediately joined a track club to train. Her goal was to stay in shape and have fun, however, she ended up winning the Canadian

100- and 200-metre sprints. “I would want people to know that you can do anything at any age and you don't have to stop.” Ms. LaFayette-Boyd's proudest moment came in Italy in 2007. At 65 years old, she broke the world record in the 100- and 200-metre sprints for her age group and beat the then-world champion. Currently, she is the executive director at the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum. Her athleticism got her inducted into both the Canadian Masters Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012 and the Regina Sports Hall of Fame in 2014. “I will be competing until I'm at least 104. I'm going to keep it up,” she said.

Christine Lwanga was Saskatchewan's first Black Human Rights Commissioner. In 1994, she became the first person of African descent to be appointed to this role. Ms. Lwanga served two terms and oversaw the implementation of Canadian Human Rights legislation over 10 years. In addition, she earned a PhD in social work from the University of Manitoba and went on to a career rooted in advocacy work. The community recognized her work as an advocate when she was anonymously recommended for the Human Rights Commissioner role that shaped her legacy. Her work helped lead to the idea of 'perceived race' being listed as a prohibited ground for discrimination. She has had notable involvement in several organizations devoted to helping people of African descent. Ms. Lwanga has co-founded



Christine Lwanga

Daughters of Africa International, the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum and the African Canadian Resource Network. “Our differences are –...not even [a] difference – it's diversity in skin tone ... and that diversity is actually a resource,” Ms. Lwanga said. “It's a beauty. It's not something that's bad or evil.”



Devon Clunis

Devon Clunis was Canada's first Black chief of police. He immigrated from Jamaica in 1975. He began work with the Winnipeg police service in 1987. He served as chief from 2012 to 2016 with what he calls a “compassionate and community building” leadership style.

After his retirement, Clunis transitioned to a consulting role with the Winnipeg police. He continued to make waves by packing Winnipeg's McNally Robinson Bookseller with more than 300 people in January 2017 for the launch of his

“It's never about the promotions or the rank. It's about the difference that we've made in people's lives.”

– Devon Clunis

first children's book, *The Little Boy from Jamaica*. Co-authored by his wife Pearlene, the book sold out before the launch! Another first for him was when he was appointed in 2020 as Ontario's first inspector general of police in Canada. The role was created to oversee policing services and improve issues around transparency, accountability and public trust.



Pilgrim Baptist Church was one of the first Black churches in Canada. The congregation and staff celebrated the church's 97th anniversary in October 2021. The church was open and welcoming to Black people as a place where they could find spiritual refreshment, social connection and community. Pilgrim Baptist Church is more than a building – it is a staple in the community. The choir is active in concerts and conventions and the congregation is encouraged to be involved in Black History Month celebrations as well as the recent Black Lives Matters demonstrations at the Manitoba Legislature in June of 2020. "I feel the church has the responsibility to reach out and service all people regardless of race or colour," said Anna Tynes.

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Of these firsts that have become very important in the history of the Prairies, is there one that sticks out as the most significant? What makes it so?

2. If you could be considered the first in your field, what would it be? How do your skills help you in this space?

❖ Activities

1. Using a medium of your choice (collage, digital, paint, sculpture, etc.), create an illustration of yourself excelling in a field of your dreams. Caption the illustration in one sentence. Don't forget to initial your masterpiece!
2. Choose one of the individuals or groups outlined. Design a trading card about the person or group. Use the features of a Pokémon card as an outline. On the back of your trading card, include their strengths, accomplishments and a short biography/history.

Check out:

Article: [6 Black Prairie Trailblazers Who Broke Barriers](#) (Orinthia Babb, Nadia Thompson, CBC News)

Podcast: [Hear profiles of these Prairie Firsts trailblazers in the Black on the Prairies podcast](#) (CBC News)

Prairie Sounds

Experience the Prairies through music created by the top Black artists hailing from Wild Rose Country, the Land of the Living Skies and Friendly Manitoba. Hear: Ruth B., Super Duty Tough Work, Nuela Charles, JayWood and more.

❖ Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite genre of music?
2. Do you have a favourite Black artist or musician? Is that person Canadian?
3. In your opinion, what makes a good song?

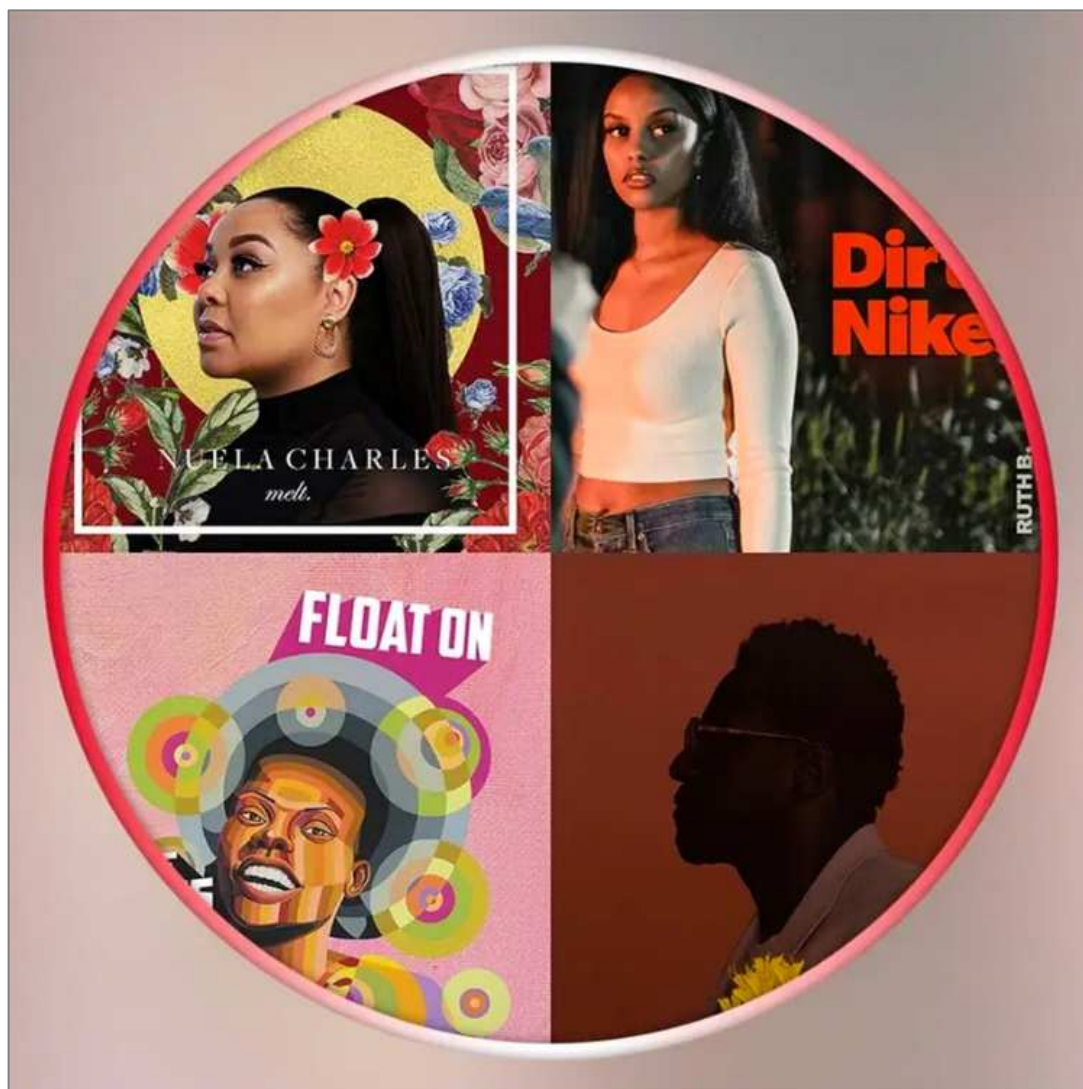
4. Do you think social justice messages and activism belong in music? Why or why not?

❖ Activities

1. Choose a song from a featured playlist of your choice from the **Black on the Prairies** source. Listen to the song, then analyze the lyrics. What do you think the artist was trying to convey? What feelings does the song bring up for you?
2. As you are listening to a song from a featured playlist of your choice from the **Black on the Prairies** source, sketchnote words and symbols and keywords or phrases that you hear and feel from the song. Keep listening until your entire page is full.
3. Choose a song from a featured playlist of your choice from the **Black on the Prairies** source. What can you tell me about the artist? List ten things you have learned in a medium of your choice (a brainstorm web, a video diary, a journal entry, a drawing, etc.)
4. Choose a song from a featured playlist of your choice from the **Black on the Prairies** source. Create a dance, poem, painting or story inspired by the song.

Check out:

CBC Music's [Black on the Prairies playlist](#)



Cover artwork, clockwise from upper left: Melt by Nuela Charles, Dirty Nikes by Ruth B., Good Morning Hunter by Odario, and Float On by The Lytics.



Tasha Spillett (Lenard Sumner)

3. BLACK AND INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

Relations between Indigenous and Black people are rich and long-standing on the Prairies. We bring you stories of solidarity, disconnection and everything in between.

Hair and the Ties that Bind

Tasha Spillett is a part of Winnipeg's urban community and identifies as multiracial. Specifically, she is Afro-Indigenous. Being a person who is the product of two distinct and beautiful cultures, she began to notice things that were slightly different about herself. The first difference that she noticed when she attended powwow was her hair. "I was the puffy-headed kid running around at the powwow," said Tasha.

The teachings passed to her from her Indigenous heritage have taught her that Indigenous hair is important. It carries teachings and should be cared for and handled as such. Growing up, her mother would boil sweetgrass and use the water

to wash her hair. Her mother taught her how to make small bundles of the hair collected in her brushes and present them in a prayerful way with each full moon. To quote Ms. Spillett, 'hair is sacred but it's also political.' She spent years tormenting her hair with chemicals and tools. Her mother pushed back against European beauty standards and wanted Tasha to see her hair as a thing of beauty.

"I knew I had a responsibility to show [my daughter] by example how liberating it is to celebrate our physical features..."

— Tasha Spillett

For Tasha, having a daughter helped her heal the wounds of self-hatred. "I knew I had a responsibility to show her by example how liberating it is to celebrate our physical features

and honour the people who live on in our bloodlines. Our Ancestors, worthy of worship, who gift us the shape of our eyes, the tone of our skin and the coils in our hair.” In order to start showing true love and self care for her hair, she followed online content of female Black hair stylists in order to learn tips and tricks to care for her natural hair. Hair has been what’s connected her to a community that she hadn’t felt a part of in a long time. Tasha is hopeful that her daughter will be proud of her curls and feel the connection she longed for.



One of many murals found in the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood in Saskatoon. (Chanss Lagaden/CBC)

Check out:

Article: [Hair and the Ties that Bind](#) (Tasha Spillett, CBC First Person)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever wanted features that you don't have? What was the situation?
2. What part of yourself are you most proud of?
3. What does your hair mean to you?
4. What is the relationship to hair and how are they similar in both African and Indigenous cultures?

❖ Activities

1. There are many stories out there about hair and identity. Write, perform, animate, collage and or scrapbook your very own hair story.
2. a. Research the history of a natural Black hair style e.g. braids, cornrows, afro or dreadlocks.
b. Compare it to the history of an Indigenous hairstyle.
c. Present the results of your research.

Treaties Beyond the State

Erica Violet Lee, a nēhiyaw (Plains Cree) poet and community organizer grew up in Pleasant Hill, a poor and predominantly Indigenous neighbourhood on the west side of Saskatoon. Reflecting back on her childhood neighbourhood, Lee talks of a neglected community and a government more willing to fund another prison versus bringing in the needed resources, agencies and programs the community desperately needed. Lee explains that Pleasant Hill was designed to uphold colonial structures created to suppress and control the Indigenous population.

In Lee's view, the incarceration system continues to uphold slavery and genocide by containing Indigenous movement and lives, and the RCMP was created to control Indigenous movement across the Prairies. However, Lee shares that there is an abolitionist reawakening growing on the Prairies and a growing need for Black and Indigenous peoples to come together in solidarity. At the same time that Indigenous people are fighting to get their stolen lands back, she perceives a need for reparations for Black people stolen from their homes and denied belonging to Canada. Lee sees Black and Indigenous past, present and futures that are interconnected.

“As a politically aware Native woman, I knew that the erasure of Blackness and Black communities was a deliberate action meant to uphold white supremacy...”

– Erica Violet Lee

When Lee was living in Toronto, she began to question why she had never learned of our own Black Canadian history. Being very politically aware, she recognized the erasure of Blackness and Black communities as an intentional tactic to uphold white supremacy. Lee believes that while Black and Indigenous people have always had a strong relationship, they need to come together more in solidarity to further their own individual movements.

Check out:

Article: [*Treaties Beyond the State: Honouring our responsibilities to each other*](#) (Erica Violet Lee, CBC First Person)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about your own local Indigenous and Black communities?
2. What are the similarities and differences in their history of resistance?
3. In the spirit of Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott, what can you do to listen, learn and stand up for these local communities? Are there local organizations that you can reach out to support?

❖ Activities

1. Create and present what you learn about your local community in any way you choose.
2. Pick a local organization to partner with and create a collaborative project that embodies giving back, developing strong, authentic community relationships and developing a deeper cultural understanding.

Not So Different

Samira Azzahir is of West Indian heritage; she grew up in Saskatchewan and currently lives in the Bahamas. “I understood this land as my great Mother, with her gentle worn roundness and curve, her whispers of sweetgrass and sage. The ground holds so much wisdom and strength.” She believes that living with the horizon will change your perspective.

Her home was full of African and Indigenous teachings. She grew up with Ann and Wes Charter – Medicine Wolf Woman and Crowfeather – her surrogate family and her mother's closest friends. Auntie Ann, as she is affectionately known, always had a way of reminding her of who she was. Uncle Wes, however, guided her in the sacred order of Nature and the power of the Medicine Wheel.

His teachings echoed the African principle of Ma'at, the divine balance and order of the



Samira Azzahir swims with her children in the Bahamas.

universe. Her father left for the United States when she was nine years old. “My African name has kept me whole. Like a staff, it walks ahead of me everywhere I go. Every time I write it out in its symbol form, I discover something new about myself and my purpose within the Great Circle.”

Both her African and Indigenous Elders have instilled an honour for Creation in all her forms. Knowledge from both cultures weave together seamlessly. Her Auntie Ann once said, “You’re lucky. You have Africa to keep in your mind and go home to one day. Where are we going to go? This is our home; we have nowhere else.”

In the Bahamas, she is teaching within her community. She tells her Island family that their upbringings were similar. Her description of the Bahamas and the Prairies is that, “they are sister landscapes with the same boundless horizons. Only the colours have changed. The soft browns, greens and golds I grew up with have become bright turquoise, teals and jade. The skies come alive within you and the straight line is a constant companion as you walk your own journey in life.”

She continues to draw and study the Egyptian symbols of the Akhet – the rising light of the dawn – and the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. Both remind her to stay connected to her spirit, her people and her path. Both remind her to look up at the heavens every now and again and marvel.

Check out:

Article: [Not So Different: Embracing Black and Indigenous Spiritualities](#) (Samira Azzahir, CBC First Person)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. In your culture, what symbols do you find important?
2. When describing the Prairies and the horizon, what descriptive words would you use?

❖ Activities

Compare the Prairie landscape to that of your ancestors. What similarities do they share? How are they different? Present this in any way you choose.



Mandela Kuet (Michael Champagne)

Being Neighbours

Mandela Kuet arrived from Sudan when he was 13 years old. One of his earliest memories was a family member perpetuating a stereotype by telling him not to leave his bike out because Indigenous people would steal it. However, through his love of basketball, he became friends with an Indigenous player named Brandon who helped him dispel similar stereotypes. Through this friendship, Kuet soon realized that they had much in common.

Kuet is no stranger to facing racism himself. Now as a parent he recalls a time where he had to deal with a racist incident at his child’s school. In that moment, he reminded this parent that they were neighbours and at the end of the day, they wanted a safe environment for their kids.

Kuet got involved at the school board level as well as the community through his work as a program advisor for the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker Program. In 2015 at an event designed to welcome newcomers, he met Cree advocate Michael Champagne and for the first time, felt truly welcomed by the Indigenous community. It was then he realized the importance of events like this to bring people of all different backgrounds together who might not have talked to each other otherwise.

Champagne says there is a lot of tension between the Indigenous and newcomer community because of the misconception they are fighting over the same resources. Yet, Mitch Bourbonnier, a Métis man and community leader in Winnipeg, said newcomers face the same challenges as Indigenous people: racism, poverty and not being accepted by the mainstream.

Bourbonnier says both communities would benefit from coming together to learn just how much they have in common. Both Kuet and Bourbonnier have worked independently and together to help their community members exit gangs.

Kuet says while programs play a vital role, the most change will come about from the fostering of personal relationships between the two communities.

Check out:

Article: [Being neighbours: From South Sudan to Winnipeg's North End](#) (Lenard Monkman, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. What are some stereotypes and or biases you have about a particular group of people?
2. Like Kuet, how can you be a better “neighbour” to this group of people and try to

gain a better understanding of what you share in common?

❖ Activities

In your school community are there groups that don't get along? What game, activity, story or dramatic scene can you design to help them see they share more in common than they think?

Identity on a Plate

Melissa Brown is the owner of Brownee's Urban Bistro in Winnipeg. She specializes in Indigenous and Jamaican cuisine, in a fused style. She grew up in Winnipeg's west end. Her mother is Indigenous, while her father is Jamaican. They met in Winnipeg in the 1980s. She was raised by her single mother, but, as sporadic and inconsistent as it was, maintained a relationship with her father. Ms. Brown identifies as an Anishinaabe-Jamaican. Quite a few of her friends identify the same way but see themselves as predominantly Indigenous because that is their mother's heritage. Her mom spoke Anishinaabemowin, and Melissa grew up eating a lot of things that were familiar to her mother and her cooking style.

At any given time, she blends her two heritages and cultures. To her, this is important for her children to witness.

At the age of 12, she went to stay with her father for an entire month. That is when she was introduced to a whole new culture and a new way of looking at food. Ms. Brown was shy in comparison with the family she met in Jamaica. She states that she experienced culture shock while in Jamaica. The two cultures and peoples are quite different. Dancers and musicians, the Jamaican side of her family is loud, open and outspoken. In Jamaica, she also experienced an entirely new palette; she was exposed to jerk chicken, plantains and breadfruit.



Melissa Brown (John Einarson/CBC)

When it came time for her to attend a postsecondary institution, she took a break from school to experiment with food styles and cooking. She began studying cooking in conjunction with culture. By learning about both of her cultures and their cooking styles, she found her passion for cooking and for food. Cooking has given her an appreciation for her roots on both sides. She has three sons and is constantly trying to pass on her pride to them through teachings that she can now instill in them.

Check out:

Article: [*Identity on a Plate: Caterer Embraces Her Anishinaabe-Jamaican Roots Through Food*](#) (Lenard Monkman, CBC News)

Podcast: *Melissa Brown puts her Indigenous and Caribbean identity on a plate* (Lenard Monkman, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. Think of your favourite food. What makes it so delicious? Does it have any cultural connection for you?
2. Is there a dish from another culture that you enjoy? What is it about the dish that makes it delicious?

❖ Activities

If you could fuse together foods from two cultures (one from your own culture and one from a different culture of your choice), what would you make? Write a recipe to show how these flavours come together.

Harlem on the Prairies

Nehal El-Hadi, a writer, researcher and editor, writes about the limiting histories that are told about Black history on the Prairies. Twenty years ago when she lived in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, many people she met hadn't had any interactions

with Black people. Between 1999 and 2003 while attending journalism school, El-Hadi spoke about her encounters with racism. She shared that there were some unpleasant encounters and some terrifying experiences of racism.

During her sojourn in Saskatchewan, El-Hadi says she also witnessed the ugliest side of Canada: a thinly filtered anti-Indigenous undercurrent that can manifest in unimaginable violence. During her time as a journalism student, El-Hadi noticed news articles that helped to perpetuate and solidify harmful stereotypes. She believes Canadian media plays an active role in suppressing Black and Indigenous peoples.

In particular, there were a series of news articles she found extremely harmful. The first, *Welcome to Harlem on the Prairies*, focused on policing Indigenous communities in Saskatoon. The headline referenced the first all-Black Western movie, a 1937 film called *Harlem on the Prairie* to suggest that like the ‘mismatched’ geographic pairing of Harlem and the Prairie, so too is Blackness unsuitable for the American Prairie. In essence, the article reinforces a belief that Blackness does not belong in Saskatchewan, and by extension Canada. The framing of the article relies on erasing Prairie Black perspectives and history and replacing them with an edited version

“I hope there's a lesson in this that leads Canadian media to examine how it continues to re-entrench systemic oppression against Black and Indigenous people.”

– Nehal El-Hadi



Harlem on the Prairie (1937) was marketed as the first all-Black Western film in the U.S. (Public domain)

that reinforces white supremacy and white perspectives. El-Hadi calls for the Canadian media to examine how it continues to re-entrench systemic oppression against Black and Indigenous people.

Check out:

Article: [Harlem on the Prairies: How Blackness is harmfully used as shorthand](#) (Nehal El-Hadi, CBC First Person)

❖ Discussion Questions

When you think of the Prairies, what images come to mind? Who are the people that you see living there? What does this reveal about your own biases and stereotypes?

❖ Activities

1. In your local newspaper and television news channels, analyze and identify the ways in which Indigenous and Black people are referenced. How does this differ to similar stories that centre white people?
2. Using your imagination, capture the words and phrases used when describing Black and Indigenous peoples and present them in any way you choose such as a word wall, visual art piece, poem, song, collage, dance, etc.

4. POLITICS AND RESISTANCE

From early community initiatives to recent Black Lives Matter protests, we examine the impact and legacy of Black resistance on the Prairies.

A Summer of Protest

From early community initiatives, historical human rights cases to Black Lives Matter protests, there is a long legacy of Black resistance on the Prairies. A recent spark of protest was ignited when anti-Blackness became painfully transparent through the killing of George Floyd in the summer of 2020. Tens of thousands of people protested across the Prairies. These unprecedented gatherings reflected the deeper and longer-lasting truths that Black people are very much part of the Prairies and that anti-Black violence doesn't only exist south of the border. Organizers rose up and planned protests and rallies, community conversations, mentorship opportunities, mental health initiatives, and designed social campaigns in their fight for Black liberation. The article centres around four of the organizers across the Prairies: Paula Collins (Saskatoon), Nampande Londe (Winnipeg) and Cinderella Fubara and Suleiman Nshimiyimana (Red Deer).



Paula Collins

Paula Collins was born in Jim Crow-era Mississippi in 1963, but shares that her earliest memory of discrimination was when she moved to Saskatoon. As far as she knows, she is the only

Black owner of a modeling agency, talent training centre, and organized the first Black Lives Matter protest in Saskatoon in 2016. Collins says that she will keep fighting for liberation until her dying breath.



Nampande Londe, right, founder of #ithappensinwinnipeg, with #CMHRStopLying member Thiané Diop at a protest in Winnipeg on June 28, 2020.

Nampande Londe of Winnipeg, Manitoba, comes from a background of community organizing but by the time 2016 rolled around, she was burnt out from the constant trauma of processing Black death at the hands of police and other institutions. At 29, she found herself re-energized and inspired by the younger generation of activists. Londe went on to create the hashtag #ithappensinwinnipeg. This became a platform for Black Winnipeggers to share their stories of anti-Blackness. Learning from her own struggles, Londe put mental health at the forefront of her organization to ensure she created opportunities to heal. She opens up about knowing there are a lot of people like her in this city who live in a lot of the same intersections and who don't feel like they can bring all of themselves to different spaces. "It's like, you go into one place and you gotta leave your queerness at the door. And then you go to another place and you gotta leave your Blackness at the door." With her organization, Londe wanted to be very intentional and create an inclusive space for people to heal and process their traumas. Recognizing that there is a 'mental health crisis' in her community, her healing events give participants an opportunity to

reconnect with their spirituality and ancestral wisdom. She believes that there are people out there working to change things in a positive way, but that there are also people trying to maintain the status quo. So that will mean, she says, that any change will be hard won. That's why it's so important to address things like trauma and grief because every change comes with loss.



Cinderella 'Cindy' Fubara, left, and Suleiman 'Sel' Nshimiyimana

Cinderella Fubara and **Suleiman Nshimiyimana** are a part of Red Deer's growing community of Black Youth who aren't afraid to speak out. Through the youth chapter of the newly formed anti-racist community organization, Ubuntu-Mobilizing Central Alberta, Fubara and Nshimiyimana have had the opportunity to organize many events. From community conversations with RCMP and city officials to rallies and testimonials, these teens are speaking out to ensure that future generations of youth do not have to experience the same racism they did.

Check out:

Article: [A Summer of Protest](#) (Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

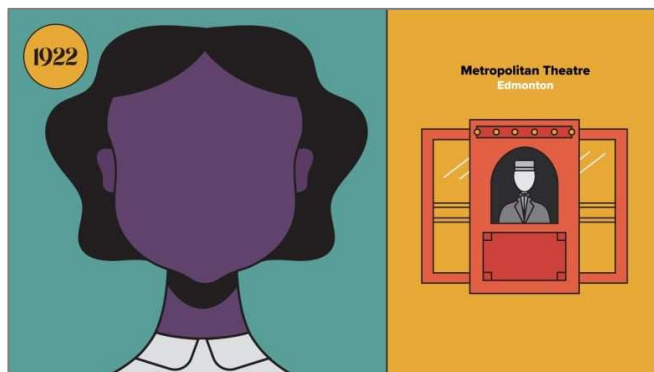
1. Which activist(s) did you most connect to? Why?
2. What is a change that you would like to see in your own school? Community? City? Province?

❖ Activities

Using these Prairie organizers as your inspiration, what type of community and/or school projects could you design? Consider the local organizations with which you could work. Draft a brief plan outlining the first steps you could take.

Lulu Anderson

If you say the name Viola Desmond, most people recognize her historic fight to be treated equally. Often called the 'Rosa Parks' of Canada, Desmond is well known and celebrated. But how many have heard of Lulu Anderson? Her case took place 24 years before Viola and, similar to Viola's incident, Anderson was refused entry to the theatre even though she had a legitimate ticket. She hired lawyers and sued the theatre. Yet, many have never even heard of Lulu Anderson and there is no mention of her in the Alberta curriculum.



In 1922 Lulu Anderson was denied entry to Edmonton's Metropolitan Theatre, despite having a valid ticket. She went on to fight the theatre in court. There are no known photographs of Anderson. (Brnesh Berhe)

Anderson's case lasted seven months and, although an Edmonton judge ruled in the favor of the theatre, stating that management could refuse any entrance as long as the ticket was refunded, the story attracted national attention. Not much else is known about her case as the Alberta government destroyed the court records in 1971, along with all case files from 1921-1949.

Little is known about Lulu herself, other than her date of birth, marital status and court date. What she did was historic and took courage and she deserves to be remembered.

There are many cases like Anderson's which demonstrate the systemic racism in the legal system. The Charles Daniels story was another case where a Black person was refused entry to a theatre in Alberta. Daniels sued the Grand Theatre in Calgary and, similar to Anderson's case, not a lot is known about the case other than the court transcripts. In 1924, Borden Park swimming pool in Edmonton refused entry to Black patrons. There is a history of hospitals funded by racist groups – for example Moosejaw Hospital in the 1920s & 1930s. Hospitals refused Black patients. In 1938, there was a case where Rhumah Utendale was refused admission to nursing school and in 1940, white soldiers from the Calgary Highlanders launched a race riot in response to a Black musician talking to a white woman.

“Provincial governments ranging from the... NDP to the...UCP have promised to include Black history in Alberta's curriculum. Despite decades of advocacy, this history remains absent.”

– Bashir Mohamed

With such a rich and diverse history, why is Black history absent from the curriculum and the history books? According to Dr. Jennifer Kelly, a professor in the department of Education Policy Studies at the University of Alberta, it's that Black people are not regarded as part of mainstream Canadian society and are often

regarded as temporary. This can then extend to not being seen as legitimate and, therefore, their concerns are not legitimate. This leads to the perception that only white or European people are “authentic citizens.”

Check out:

Article: [Lulu Anderson](#) (Bashir Mohamed, CBC News)

Podcast: [Bashir Mohamed goes digging for Alberta's Black civil rights history](#) (Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

Is there anything about these stories that shocks you?

❖ Activities

1. Choose one of the cases mentioned above and do a presentation on it. You can present in any way you choose e.g. infographic, role play, visual art, writing etc.
2. Create a mock trial that explores what happened in one case.

Is Anyone in Power Listening?

Adora Nwofor is a comedian and anti-racist educator. In addition, she is the Black Lives Matter president in Calgary. She is not alone in her anti-racism and Black Lives Matter advocacy work. Many people have shared her calls for change to how communities are policed, but change hasn't come.

In 2020, there were overwhelming demands for police reform and abolition. Black advocates drafted recommendations for police and community leaders to more effectively address systemic racism and police brutality in their

communities. One of the recommendations was to defund the police and shift the money to mental health and social services agencies to better equip them to handle and stomp out the root causes of crime, such as poverty, housing insecurities and addictions. Others suggested the abolition of the police entirely.

While many conversations and meetings were had, little to no change has been made across the Prairies. In some areas of the Prairies such as Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg, police services all received budget increases for the 2021 year.

Nwofor says she's frustrated, angry and exhausted. "[They] can say, 'Oh, we see that you are struggling and it's awful and we don't want that, but...we're going to continue to do the same stuff to you and not give you the opportunity to fix it for yourself.' That's just manipulation. That's just more white supremacy."



Adora Nwofor is not alone in her anti-racism and Black Lives Matter advocacy work. Many people have shared her calls for change to how communities are policed, but change hasn't come. (Leah Hennel Photography)

❖ Activities

As a class, research the roles of police, mental health and social services. Then divide the class into two teams to debate whether the police should be defunded or reformed.

Check out:

Article: [Black activists across the Prairies are calling for defunding of police. Is Anyone in Power Listening?](#) (Kendall Latimer, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of police, mental health and social services? Do you think some of the responsibilities of one of these groups would be better handled by others? Why or why not?
2. What does "defund the police" mean to you? What do you think about current policing tactics and calls for reforms? How could people and communities be better served by police services?

5. BLACK TO THE FUTURE

The Prairies have Canada's fastest growing Black population. We imagine futures where Blackness is at the centre of the Prairie social fabric.

Prairie Portraits

Across the Prairie provinces, there are so many game changers, innovators and citizens who seek justice and positivity for all Black settlers to this land. Here, you will see a few highlighted for their hard work and many talents.



Maryam Tsegaye is a 17-year-old from Fort McMurray, Alberta. What makes her so special? She's a normal teenager that studies, is artistic, hangs out with her friends and occasionally posts videos on the internet. However, one particular video that she posted of herself explaining, and ultimately, making quantum tunnelling a much better understood concept, resulted in her winning the Breakthrough Junior Challenge. She won a quarter of a million dollars, as well as money for her school's science lab, and a generous tip for her science teacher, who inspired her.

Leander Lane is from both Edmonton, Alberta and Maidstone, Saskatchewan. Julius Caesar Lane formed the first Black settlement in Saskatchewan with 12 families. In 2002, the Shiloh Baptist Church and Cemetery Restoration Society was established for the Shiloh people.



Leander raised thousands of dollars to restore the church and hired a geologist to recover the stories of the Shiloh people. In 2018, the site became a provincial landmark. His short story "Shiloh: Remembering Saskatchewan's African-American Pioneers" appeared in the 2020 spring edition of Saskatchewan's Prairies North magazine, and his book, *The Road to Shiloh*, is slated for release in early 2022.



Adebayo Chris Katiiti Kalibbala is from Edmonton, Alberta. He is of Ugandan descent and is an athlete, activist and the founder of RARICA Now. He applied for Canadian refugee status after the 2016 Gay and Lesbian Aquatics Championships in Edmonton. He is dedicated to helping refugees in the LGBTQ+ community find support and things they need when moving to Canada. He won an award for his efforts at the 2018 Pride Awards.

**All illustrations in this section by visual artist Enas Satir*

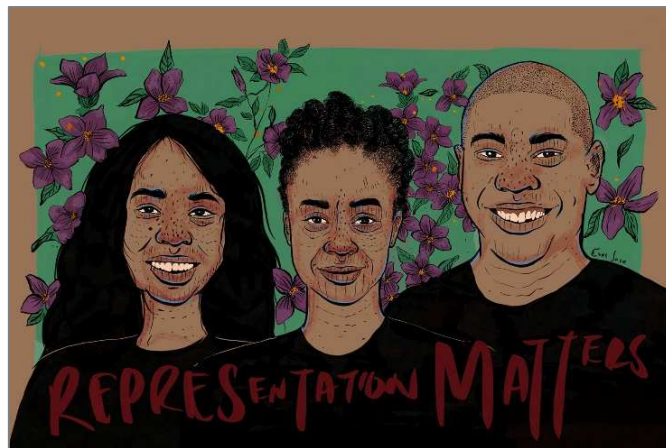


Muna de Ciman, also known as ‘Aunty Muna,’ hails from Regina, Saskatchewan. Originally, she is from Sierra Leone and is a resource for newcomers to Regina. She supports youth who have come into contact with the justice system as part of her 9-to-5 job, serves on the boards of both the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, and acts as the union representative for workers of colour with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. She has also been known to help newcomers find work, put people up in her home, find money to put kids through school, give people rides when they need them and even enlist her own children – all accomplished in their own right – to mentor youth.



Alphonso Davies has roots in Alberta, but he wasn’t born there. Born in a Ghanaian refugee camp of Liberian descent, he immigrated with his

family to Edmonton, Alberta, to escape civil unrest. More often than not, he is described as the face of Canadian soccer. He attended a soccer academy to hone his skills and the rest, as they say, is history. He is currently the youngest player on Canada’s National men’s team and the clear star of any match he plays.



Audrey Gordon, Uzoma Asagwara and **Jamie Moses** are all from Winnipeg. In 2019, these three Black MLAs were elected in Manitoba. Audrey Gordon, a public servant for 25 years and director of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority’s home care program, continued to etch her name into the history books after her groundbreaking election. In January 2021, the Progressive Conservative MLA for Southdale was tapped to lead the newly created Department of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery, making her Manitoba’s very first Black cabinet minister. Uzoma Asagwara also made history in more ways than one when they became the first non-binary and the first Black queer person to win a seat in the legislative assembly. A year later, the NDP MLA for Union Station became the first Black person in Manitoba to introduce legislation and pass a law. Prior to entering politics, Asagwara was a psychiatric nurse and addiction specialist, founder of the Queer People of Colour collective and a former member of the Canadian women’s national basketball team. Jamie Moses, also an accomplished athlete with

three provincial basketball titles to his name, among other accolades, claimed his seat, representing St. Vital, after losing in the same riding in 2016. Aside from his passion for sports and creating recreational opportunities for youth, the NDP MLA has been a community leader for health-care groups, the Glenwood Community Centre and the Glenwood Parent Advisory Council.



There are many **Youth Activists** from across the Prairies. Protests against anti-Black racism swept the Prairies in 2020 in unexpected places and numbers. They marked the birth of a new generation of anti-racism activists and illustrated the power of Gen Z organizers in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Up to 20,000 people showed up to Winnipeg's largest protest that summer, organized by Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg – a group whose youngest member, Imani Pinder, was 17 at the time. In Lacombe, Alberta, a city of about 15,000 people just north of Red Deer, teenagers from the Ubuntu Youth Council took the mic to denounce anti-Black racism. In Saskatoon, university student Braydon Page organized one of the largest protests the city has ever seen. Much of this organizing continues to take place online, where social media-savvy groups such as Black in Sask and BLM YXE use their platforms to host community conversations, politicize their followers and celebrate Black people making a difference in the Prairies. Together, young Black activists across the Prairies are taking up space and speaking up like never before.



Larissa Crawford resides in Calgary, Alberta. She is Métis and Jamaican. She is a mom. Her daughter was born while she was studying at York University. Her work fights anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism. She has lobbied for Indigenous world views at the UN Sustainable Development Goals G7 Summit as a youth delegate in 2018. Currently, Ms. Crawford acts as an adviser to the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate for her work as a restorative circle keeper and activist. She was named to Corporate Knights' Top 30 Under 30 in Sustainability in 2019.

Check out:

Article: [Prairie Portraits: Celebrating Movers & Shakers Shaping the Region](#) (Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

Podcast: [Muna De Ciman, a.k.a. 'Aunty Muna', shows up for Regina's youth](#) (Melissa Fundira, CBC News)

Video: [Alberta student first Canadian to win international science competition](#) (CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. As a student in grade ____, how can you make a powerful impact in your community?
2. Which of these individuals do you see yourself in?

❖ Activities

1. Anyone can make a change. Create a public service announcement, highlighting something that you would like changed in your community.
2. Write a poem outlining the change you seek. Write in the form of poetry that is most comfortable for you (haiku, cinquain, acrostic, free verse, etc.)



Chaka Zinyemba plays the mbira dzavadzimu, a larger instrument than the other common version, the mbira nyanga nyanga. (Submitted by C. Zinyemba)

British ranks, issuing a unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom. “There was this whole movement of taking back what was ours,” Zinyemba said. “Let’s end this colonial regime.” In 1980 independence and renaming came to what we know as Zimbabwe.

Mr. Zinyemba began to overcome the stigma and shame many associated with the instrument in his senior year of high school in Zimbabwe when he heard an album of famed Zimbabwean musician Chiwoniso Maraire. By learning how to play the Mbira, Chaka felt like he was doing something meaningful and worthwhile. When he arrived in Canada, Chaka moved in with his sister. He didn’t know who would teach him to play this instrument until the stars aligned. During the first couple of months at school he heard of another student, Tendai Muparutsa, who was completing a PhD about the spread of traditional Zimbabwean music throughout North America.

Mbira: From Demonized to Exalted

“People shouldn’t wait to be entertained; they should create.” Chaka Zinyemba is originally from Zimbabwe. He is a musician who plays an instrument that is controversial in nature. The Mbira has been played by the Shona people for hundreds of years. The instrument was all but legally banned by colonial rulers since Queen Victoria’s Britain seized control of the region in the late 19th century.

“The actual instrument was believed to be the portal, so to speak, through which we communicated with the ancestors,” said Zinyemba. This was a big no-no for the religious institutions that were coming in from England. From 1898 to 1964, Zimbabwe was known as Southern Rhodesia. In 1965, the country’s predominately white government broke from

“We really should take more pride and more ownership of what is ours, what belongs to us.”

– Chaka Zinyemba

“We play piano in church. People play guitars in church ... Why can’t that happen with the Mbira?” The western shores of North America are a hotbed for Mbira music, stretching all the way up into Alaska. At least four major Mbira festivals take place in North America each year, including one in B.C. Chaka also formed the Mbira Renaissance Band, a multicultural group made up of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds. The Mbira Renaissance Band has already been nominated for local Edmonton music awards.

Zinyemba said he has aspirations of being nominated for a JUNO some day.

“Sometimes we don't value the things that we should value, the things that are ours,” he said. “We really should take more pride and more ownership of what is ours, what belongs to us.”

Check out:

Article: [How the Mbira – an Instrument with a Complicated History in Zimbabwe – Found a Following in Western Canada](#) (Tanara McLean, CBC News)

Video: [History of the Mbira](#) (Tanara McLean, CBC News)

Podcast: [Revolution Mbira](#) (Tanara McLean, The Doc Project, CBC Radio)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. If you could play any instrument, what would it be?
2. In the country where your family originated, are there any unique instruments that are different from the mainstream guitar or piano?
3. Embracing the Mbira helped Chaka embrace his culture. What things in your culture are a part of you?

❖ Activities

1. Using a Venn diagram or another graphic organizer, compare and contrast a Mbira to an instrument of your choice. What makes them similar? How are they different? Include a minimum of three similarities and five differences.
2. Find a popular song that has Mbira as the main instrument. Create a 30-second dance to the sounds that you hear. Your movements can be structured (think TikTok) or fluid (think interpretive) or a combination of the two.

3. A Mbira resembles a piano in some ways. Are you able to recreate one from recyclable materials? Use what you can find around the house or your school to make your very own Mbira.

Where are All the Black People?

Hailing from Leduc, Alberta, Serena Prescott grew up going to Black churches. A reference point would be something like T.D. Jakes congregation. Serena is the descendant of settlers who founded Amber Valley in the 1900s. Now, she attends City Life. That is where she met her husband, who is also the Pastor's son. In 2019, they were married. Her husband is white and they still receive stares due to their interracial marriage. Something that she noticed about her parish is the lack of diversity in the congregation. In fact, it is something that bothers her husband and his family as well. “The infamous quote of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King is, 'The most divided time in America is Sunday morning',” Rohadi Nagassar said. I think that the more people become educated and realize that racism is still happening, it actually seems to get better,” Prescott said. The Church has always been a pillar of strength for the Black community facing rejection. According to David Este, adjunct professor of social work at the University of Calgary, early “Black churches served as



Serena Prescott (centre) and her husband Kaelan Prescott (left) onstage with their child at City Life Church in Leduc, Alberta. (Submitted by S. Prescott)

platforms to address different forms of racism and discrimination in Canadian society.” The church has always been more than just a place of worship, as well. It’s a place to debate, celebrate and join in activities with other people.

Rebecca Johnson is a Ghanian-Canadian who moved from Toronto to Edmonton. Whilst looking for a parish to attend, she found a community in Cornerstone Church of God. The Church is for everyone, not just Africans. There is no exclusion there. What people know or refer to as a ‘normal’ church is a church led by a white male with a predominantly white congregation. Any form of worship that strays from that formula is typically ‘othered.’ Mainstream Christian radio in Alberta is also predominantly white. By not including Black Gospel artists on the Christian radio stations, it’s a form of rejection. Nagassar – who is West Indian, Chinese and Japanese – used to be a pastor for a well-known evangelical denomination. He left last year after it took the position that clergy can’t perform same-sex unions. He founded Calgary’s Cypher Church, which bills itself as “A church for the dreamers, innovators, artists and outsiders.” He said he believes all Christians on the Prairies can come together in truly multi-ethnic expressions. “I feel like the church has always represented community and it’s failed sometimes at representing community, but that’s what God made it for, for us to commune with him but as a body,” Ms. Johnson said. Rebecca now has a podcast called Speaking Arrangements.

Check out:

Article: [*‘Where are All the Black People?’: The Racial Divide in Prairie Christian Churches*](#) (Thandiwe Konguavi, CBC News)

❖ Discussion Questions

1. If you had a podcast, what would it be about? What would you call it? What guests would you want to feature? Would you have a logo?
2. In the Black community, church is an important place. In your culture, are there any places or spaces that are important for people to gather?
3. In what ways can a community of people gather?

❖ Activities

1. Imagine you have a podcast. On Flipgrid, create a one-minute intro for your ‘listeners.’ Make sure to introduce the podcast and talk about what they can expect to hear when they tune in.
2. Design a logo for your podcast.
3. In groups of three to five students, act out a scenario where people gather. The setting does not necessarily have to be a church, however, the characters in your scene are gathering with something in common. Are they solving a problem? Helping a friend? Fighting crime? Use your imagination!
4. Create a story or dramatic scene that explores the real issues Christians face today. Suggestions of themes to explore are identity, sexuality and racism.

Looking Back to Look Forward

Explore this list of articles, films, books and more that chronicle everything from 19th-century Black literary works to 21st-century Black collective action.

To access these resources, [click here](#).

Important note

Use these resources at your discretion for your grade level. Ensure that the content level that you present is appropriate for the grade level that you teach.

Classroom Resources

In addition to the variety of resources available on the [Black on the Prairies](#) website here are some supplemental resources

Kindergarten to Grade 3 (~Ages 5-9)

BOOKS

- Nana's Cold Days by Adwoa Badoe
- All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold
- Black is a Rainbow Color by Angela Joy
- Howdy! I'm John Ware by Ayesha Clough
- A Kids Book About Empathy by Darin K. Roberts
- I Am Every Good Thing by Derrick Barnes
- Henry's Freedom Box by Ellen Levine
- I Am Enough by Grace Byers
- Courageous People Who Changed the World by Heidi Poelman
- A Kids Book About Racism by Jelani Memory
- New Kid by Jerry Craft
- Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged by Jody Nyasha Warner
- Let's Talk About Race by Julius Lester
- Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o
- Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry
- All Aboard! Elijah McCoy's Steam Engine by Monica Kulling
- I Love My Hair by Natasha Tarpley
- Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad? By Sandy Lynne Holman
- Africville by Shauntay Grant

WEB SOURCES

- [CBC Kids Black History Month Activities](#)
- [Alberta's Black Pioneer heritage](#)

Grade 4 to 6 (~Ages 9-12)

BOOKS

- A Path of Stars by Anne Sibley O'Brien
- So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo
- Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship by Irene Latham & Charles Waters
- Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged by Jody Nyasha Warner
- The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander
- Amazing Black Atlantic Canadians by Lindsay Ruck
- Black Women Who Dared by Naomi M. Moyer
- The Kids Book of Black Canadian History by Rosemary Sadlier
- Black Panther by Ryan Coogler
- All Because You Matter by Tami Charles
- This Book is Anti Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work by Tiffany Jewell
- Count Me In by Varsha Bajaj
- The Talk: Conversations, about Race, Love and Truth by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson

WEB SOURCES

- [Alberta's Black Pioneer Heritage](#)
- [CBC's Being Black In Canada](#)

Grade 7 to 9 (~Ages 12-15)

BOOKS

- Take the Mic: Fictional Stories of Everyday Resistance by Bethany C. Morrow
- Pourin' Down Rain by Cheryl Foggo
- The Skin We're In by Desmond Cole
- The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person by Frederick Joseph
- So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

- Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship by Irene Latham & Charles Waters
- Stamped: Racism, Anti Racism, and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi
- Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology edited by Karina Vernon
- The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
- Amazing Black Atlantic Canadians by Lindsay Ruck
- Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice by Mahogany L. Browne
- Talking About Freedom by Natasha L. Henry
- Black Panther by Ryan Coogler
- Blended by Sharon Draper
- All Because You Matter by Tami Charles
- This Book is Anti Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work by Tiffany Jewell
- Count Me In by Varsha Bajaj
- The Talk: Conversations, about Race, Love and Truth by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson

WEB SOURCES

- [CBC's: Being Black In Canada](#)
- [Curio's Black History in Canada theme](#)
- [Kicking Up a Fuss: The Charles Daniel Story](#)
- [John Ware Reclaimed](#)
- [Secret Alberta: The Former Life of Amber Valley](#)
- [Alberta's Black Pioneer Heritage](#)
- [The Skin We're In: Pulling Back the Curtain of Racism in Canada](#)
- [Burn Scars by Tina Munro](#)
- [What are microaggressions?](#)

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Grade Ten to Grade Twelve (~Ages 15-18)

BOOKS

- The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
- Concrete Rose by Angie Thomas
- Take The Mic: Fictional Stories of Everyday Resistance by Bethany C. Morrow

- Pourin' Down Rain by Cheryl Foggo
- Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
- The Skin We're In by Desmond Cole
- Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
- The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person by Frederick Joseph
- Punching The Air by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam
- Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi
- Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology by Karina Vernon
- The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
- The Book of Negroes by Lawrence Hill
- Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice by Mahogany L. Browne
- Talking About Freedom by Natasha L. Henry
- Dear Martin by Nic Stone
- Policing Black Lives by Robyn Maynard
- Black Panther by Ryan Coogler
- This Book is Anti Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work by Tiffany Jewell
- The Talk: Conversations, about Race, Love and Truth by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson
- Monster by Walter Dean Myers
- Home by Warsan Shire

WEB SOURCES

- [CBC's: Being Black In Canada](#)
- [Curio's Black History in Canada theme](#)
- [Kicking Up a Fuss: The Charles Daniel Story](#)
- [John Ware Reclaimed](#)
- [Secret Alberta: The Former Life of Amber Valley](#)
- [Alberta's Black Pioneer Heritage](#)
- [The Skin We're In: Pulling Back the Curtain of Racism in Canada](#)
- [Burn Scars by Tina Munro](#)
- [What are microaggressions?](#)