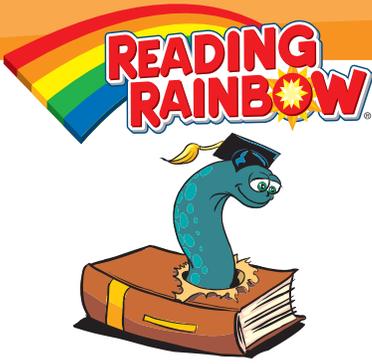


# BLACK HISTORY



Episode	Segment
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter	Feature book, drum making, African instruments, African dance troupe
Follow the Drinking Gourd	Entire episode
Uncle Jed's Barbershop	Feature book, a capella quartet
Amazing Grace	Feature book, Whoopi Goldberg
The Wonderful Tower of Watts	Interviews with children

## Setting the stage:

- Create a book corner with books about famous black people. Ask your media specialist for assistance to help gather the collection.
- Display pictures of famous black people on a bulletin board to encourage discussions.
- This might be a good time to consider gathering a permanent collection of books and pictures about all cultures for your classroom. Rely on your media specialist to recommend some good books. Acceptance of others is learned during a child's developmental years. Providing an environment year round that encourages acceptance of diversity might be your goal, rather than a one week unit. Are there pictures and books available in your classroom throughout the year? **Reading Rainbow's** commitment to diversity ensures that all children who watch the series on a regular basis will see themselves and their cultures represented in the programs we produce, regardless of their backgrounds.

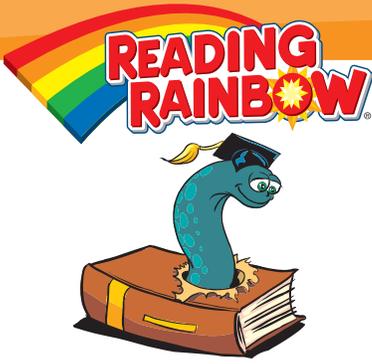
## Topics for Discussion:

- Revisit the book **Follow the Drinking Gourd** so that students can examine the illustrations. Look for the Big Dipper and Peg Leg Joe's special mark that he left for escaping slaves to find. Use this opportunity to provide some background to the Underground Railroad activities (Fugitive Slave Law). Help students understand that escaped slaves were not safe even in the northern states. In the program, it was mentioned that slaves looked for a lighted lamp in the window of a "station" to determine if it was safe to approach the house. Discuss why it was necessary to light a lamp. Include in the discussion why students think that there were so many people who wanted to help runaway slaves.
- After viewing **Amazing Grace**, talk about what stereotyping is and how it could have prevented Grace from playing Peter Pan. Discuss situations familiar to students in which stereotypes have been broken.
- LeVar explains the Underground Railroad was not as a conventional railroad with a train on a track, but as a way for slaves to travel from one safe house to another on their way to Canada or to states where slavery was illegal. Discuss with students why the railroad metaphor was an appropriate description.
- Significant time in these programs is devoted to music. Discuss with students why music played such an important role in the lives of slaves. Why is music still important in our lives today?
- Since slaves were typically not allowed to learn to read and write, storytelling was an important means of communication. Talk about why slaves were not educated and why storytelling became crucial to their survival. Ask your media specialist to assist in locating some stories passed down through generations of slaves. **The People Could Fly** by Virginia Hamilton is a useful collection.

## Activities to get started:

- Obtain some music with African rhythms, played by instruments that originated in African cultures. Take students to a spacious area and play the music, inviting them to move the way the music makes them feel.
- On a map of the United States, locate the southern states from which slaves escaped, the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and the states where the vast network of the Underground Railroad was located.

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- On a map of the United States, locate the southern states from which slaves escaped, the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and the states where the vast network of the Underground Railroad was located.
- Harriet Tubman was an African-American woman who was one of the "conductors" on the Underground Railroad. She made repeated trips to guide slaves to freedom. Other African-Americans, born as slaves, made significant contributions on behalf of slaves and to American history in general (e.g., Phillis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Crispus Attucks, Nat Turner, Anthony Burns, Dred Scott, and others). Working individually or in small groups, have students research the lives and accomplishments of these people or another African-American who has made notable contributions to society, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Langston Hughes, Bessie Coleman, Jackie Robinson, Louis Armstrong, W.E.B DuBois, and others. Be sure to allow time for students to share their research with others.
- Make a timeline of African American history. Place individuals that the students have researched on the timeline, as well as specific events such as the Emancipation Proclamation and the passage of the 13th Amendment, and general time frames for the bulk of the slave trade and activity on the Underground Railroad.
- Make a chart detailing differences between what slaves were expected to do and what slaves were not allowed to do. Students may need to research slavery before being able to complete the chart.
- Ask your media specialist to aid in securing some African Folk Tales. Read a few of them to the class and discuss the meanings of the stories. Provide students with paper, pencils, and crayons. Ask them to write a folk tale and illustrate their stories. Invite students to share their stories with the class.
- Teach about equal treatment by passing out snacks to only a select group of children (e.g., girls, boys, blue eyes, blond hair, etc.). When the other children question why, explain that only the \_\_\_\_\_ are getting snacks today. After they eat their snacks, call everyone together and read a book about Martin Luther King, Jr. Ask the children who did not receive a snack how they felt about the situation. Then explain that you were demonstrating prejudice or unequal treatment. The children now should have a greater understanding of how unfairly black people were treated in King's day. After the discussion, give snacks to those who did not get one earlier.
- Make a black and white collage by giving each student a small piece of black paper, a small piece of white paper, and a larger different colored paper. Ask students to tear the black and white papers into small pieces and glue them on the colored paper to create a unique collage. When completed, ask each student to show his or her picture and give a brief description of it. Discuss that neither the black nor the white pieces alone would have created as interesting a picture, yet together they formed a much more powerful piece. The same holds true for our society today.