

Trailblazers of Change: Black History in Britain

Learning objective: To identify and evaluate the significant contributions of key figures in Black British history and understand their impact on modern society.

Read each question carefully. Use your historical knowledge to provide detailed explanations. For the final questions, use your critical thinking skills to connect past events to present-day values.

Ellie the elephant has a magnificent memory and loves to share stories about people who changed the world. From the bravery of Mary Seacole, who cared for soldiers during the Crimean War, to the poetic voices of Olaudah Equiano, who wrote about his experiences to challenge the slave trade, Black history is a vital thread in the tapestry of British life. Think about the activists, artists, and leaders who fought for fairness and built the diverse communities we live in today.

Word bank: Injustice · Equality · Contribution · Pioneer · Legacy · Diversity · Resilience · Campaign

1. Mary Seacole travelled a great distance to help others during the Crimean War. Explain why her actions were considered courageous at that time. (2 marks)

2. Olaudah Equiano used his writing to campaign against the slave trade. Why is it important for historians to study primary accounts written by people who experienced these events themselves? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the challenges faced by Black pioneers in the 19th century with the challenges people might face today when campaigning for equality. (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: Why do we celebrate Black History Month in schools across the UK? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to our understanding of British history if we only focused on one perspective instead of looking at the diverse contributions of all people? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a commemorative stamp that features an important figure from Black British history. Include symbols around the border that represent their achievements (for example, medical tools for a nurse, or a quill and paper for a writer).



Extension challenge: Choose one Black British pioneer who has made a difference in science, the arts, or sport. Research their life and write a short, persuasive speech explaining why they should be honoured with a statue in your local town square.