Celebrating Pioneers: Black History Month

Learning objective: To understand the significance of Black History Month and the contributions of historical figures to British society.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Use full sentences to demonstrate your understanding of the historical significance of the text.

Every October, the United Kingdom observes Black History Month. It is a vital period dedicated to celebrating the rich cultural heritage and profound contributions of Black people throughout British history. While history is often viewed through a singular lens, this month encourages us to broaden our perspective and recognise the diverse individuals who have helped shape our nation.

From the scientists and doctors who supported the NHS during its infancy, to the artists and writers who have enriched our creative landscape, the influence of Black Britons is woven into the fabric of our society. Ellie, our elephant friend with a memory for history, reminds us that celebrating these stories is not just about looking back at the past; it is about learning from the resilience of those who campaigned for equality and justice. By reflecting on these achievements, we gain a deeper understanding of our shared national identity. Black History Month serves as a poignant reminder that inclusive history is accurate history. It challenges us to acknowledge the struggles faced by previous generations and celebrate the progress made, while continuing to strive for a fairer future for every child.

Word bank: Pioneer · Contribution · Heritage · Resilience · Perspective · Significance

1. According to the text, what is the primary purpose of observing Black History Month in the United Kingdom? (2 marks)

2. Identify two specific areas of British society mentioned where Black Britons have made significant contributions. (2 marks)

3. Why does the author suggest that 'inclusive history is accurate history'? (3 marks)

4. What does the phrase 'woven into the fabric of our society' imply about the influence of Black Britons? (3 marks)

5. Do you believe it is important to have a specific month dedicated to Black history rather than integrating it into the curriculum throughout the year? Justify your viewpoint. (4 marks)

Draw: Design a commemorative postage stamp that celebrates a historical figure or a moment of progress in Black British history. Include symbols that represent resilience and community.

Extension challenge: Research a Black British historical figure who is not widely known. Write a short biography explaining their contribution and justify why they should be considered a 'pioneer'. Compare their experiences to those of a modern-day activist. What might happen if their achievements were excluded from history books?