Trailblazers of Change: A Historical Mapping Activity

Learning objective: To analyse the contributions of significant historical figures and articulate their impact on society through persuasive and descriptive writing.

Ellie the elephant has been curating her memory archives for Black History Month. She has selected four historical figures who paved the way for progress: Mary Seacole (nursing), Walter Tull (football and military), Claudia Jones (journalism and activism), and Olaudah Equiano (autobiography and abolition). Your task is to match their legacy to the correct archival 'folder' and then use the provided word bank to construct a short, persuasive biography for one of them, explaining why their actions still resonate today.

Word bank: Resilience · Pioneering · Advocacy · Integrity · Legacy · Barrier-breaking · Humanitarian · Fortitude

1. Identify which figure is best associated with the following description: 'A trailblazing soldier and professional footballer who demonstrated immense courage during the First World War.' Explain the significance of his role in breaking societal barriers. (3 marks)

2. Mary Seacole travelled vast distances to provide care during the Crimean War. Compare and contrast the challenges she faced with the modern role of a humanitarian worker. Justify your reasoning. (4 marks)

3. Claudia Jones used her voice to challenge inequality in Britain. If you were a journalist in the 1950s, what headline would you write to highlight her work in establishing the Notting Hill Carnival? Why did you choose these specific words? (3 marks)

4. Olaudah Equiano’s autobiography provided a harrowing, first-hand account that swayed public opinion against the slave trade. Explain why personal narratives are often more persuasive than statistical reports in changing public policy. (3 marks)

5. Select one of the figures mentioned. Write a brief paragraph (4-6 sentences) using at least three words from the word bank to describe their impact on British history. (4 marks)

6. What might happen to our understanding of British history if these individuals had not documented their experiences or stood up for their beliefs? Consider the 'silencing' of historical records. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Legacy Shield' for one of the historical figures. Include symbols that represent their achievements (e.g., a medical cross for Mary Seacole or a pen for Olaudah Equiano) and write their most important contribution on a banner at the bottom.

Extension challenge: Research a lesser-known figure from Black British history. Create a 'museum exhibit' proposal, including a list of three artefacts you would display to tell their story and a 100-word persuasive blurb explaining why they deserve a permanent place in the national curriculum.