BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING OUR SISTERS

Meet some incredible women who have shaped history, and those who continue to pave the way today

MARY SEACOLE

A British-Jamaican nurse who set up the British Hotel during the Crimean War (1853–1856). Her selfless actions helped to save the lives of many injured soldiers. In 2004, she was voted the greatest black Briton.

HARRIET TUBMAN

An American abolitionist (someone who wants to end slavery) and social activist. After escaping slavery herself, she worked on the Underground Railroad in America, helping many other enslaved people find freedom before the Civil War broke out.

KATHERINE JOHNSON

One of the first African-American women to work as a scientist at NASA. Her maths skills helped to launch several important missions and, in 2015, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom – America's highest civilian honour.

LILIAN BADER

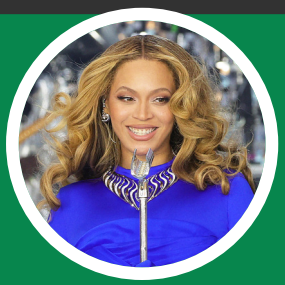
One of the first black women to join the Royal Air Force and one of the first women to become an 'instrument repairer'. This meant she could check instruments on aircraft for faults. She was later promoted to acting corporal.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

The first African-American to have her poetry published. She may have been enslaved by the Wheatley family, but that didn't stop her making a name for herself in America. In 1773 she also came to England. Her first poetry collection was called *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*.

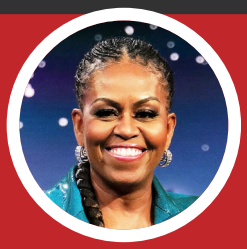
SERENA WILLIAMS

An American tennis player, who has won more Grand Slam singles titles (a total of 23) than any other woman during the open era. She's also competed in doubles tournaments with her sister Venus Williams, who is a champion in her own right.



BEYONCÉ

A superstar singer with millions of fans across the world! Often known as Queen Bey, she is one of the most famous and influential performers of her time.



MICHELLE OBAMA

In 2008, she became the first African-American First Lady of the United States. She campaigns for women's rights, healthy families and education for girls. She's also a qualified lawyer!

DR MAGGIE ADERIN-POCOCK

An English space scientist, with a degree in physics and a PhD (further qualification) in mechanical engineering. She's used her impressive science skills to help make scientific instruments and systems for spacecraft.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: CELEBRATING OUR SISTERS

1) Match the name to the achievement

Mary Seacole	First African-American to have her poetry published
Katherine Johnson	Voted the greatest Black Briton
Phillis Wheatley	Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom

2) List three things campaigned for by Michelle Obama.

3a) How many Grand Slam singles titles has Serena Williams won?
3b) What does it mean when Venus Williams is described as a 'champion in her own right'?

4) Why are the achievements of Harriet Tubman and Phillis Wheatley especially noteworthy?

5) Who is often known as 'Queen Bey'?

6a) Which of these statements is false?

- [ ] Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock has a PhD in physics
- [ ] Michelle Obama is a qualified lawyer
- [ ] Beyoncé has millions of fans

6b) Correct the false statement.

7) Which two things was Lilian Bader 'one of the first' to do?

8) What do Katherine Johnson and Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock have in common?

9) Which of the women featured in the article do you think has the most interesting story? What else would you like to find out about her?

10) Which of the achievements mentioned in the article did you find most impressive? Why?

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2. .....

3. .....

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TEACHER ANSWERS

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a quick reference guide. Suggestions are given for the '*Expected response*' or starting point that pupils could give. The '*Developed response*' then gives more in-depth ideas that students can work towards as they develop their reading comprehension skills.

For a list of the reading skills used, please email schools@firstnews.co.uk.

1. Match the name to the achievement
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
***Expected response*:**
- Mary Seacole → Voted the greatest Black Briton
- Katherine Johnson → Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Phillis Wheatley → First African-American to have her poetry published

2. List three things campaigned for by Michelle Obama.
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
***Expected response*:**
- Women's rights, healthy families, education for girls

3a. How many Grand Slam singles titles has Serena Williams won?
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
***Expected response*:**
- 23

***Developed response*:**
- 23, which is more than any other woman during the open era

3b. What does it mean when Venus Williams is described as a 'champion in her own right'?
READING SKILL – Understand vocabulary in context
(NC2a)
***Expected response*:**
- It means she has also won competitions

***Developed response*:**
- We are told that Venus competes with her successful sister in doubles tournaments, but the phrase 'champion in her own right' tells us that she has also won competitions on her own; in other words, she doesn't rely on her sister to be able to win things.

4. Why are the achievements of Harriet Tubman and Phillis Wheatley especially noteworthy?
READING SKILL – Infer information based on own knowledge (non-text based inference)
(NC 6, 7 & 8)
***Expected response*:**
- Because they were both victims of slavery

***Developed response*:**
- Because both women had been enslaved, meaning that they would not have had the time, freedom or money to make their own choices. They were in a position of powerlessness, yet despite this, they both achieved remarkable things.

5. Who is often known as 'Queen Bey'?
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
Expected response:
• Beyoncé

6a. Which of these statements is false?
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
Expected response:

- [x] Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock has a PhD in physics
- [ ] Michelle Obama is a qualified lawyer
- [ ] Beyoncé has millions of fans

6b. Correct the false statement
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
Expected response:
• Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock has a degree in physics.
Developed response:
• Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock has a degree in physics and a PhD in mechanical engineering.

7. Which two things was Lilian Bader 'one of the first' to do?
READING SKILL – Find and explain information.
(NC 2a)
Expected response:
• She was one of the first black women to join the Royal Air Force, and one of the first women to become an instrument repairer.

8. What do Katherine Johnson and Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock have in common?
READING SKILL – Summarise information
(NC 2e)
Expected response:
• They are both scientists
Developed response:
• They are both scientists, whose work has been influential in the field of space exploration.

9. Which of the women featured in the article do you think has the most interesting story? What else would you like to find out about her?
READING SKILL – Develop opinions and provide justification for viewpoints.
(NC 6, 7 & 8)
Expected response:
Pupils' own responses

10. Which of the achievements mentioned in the article did you find most impressive? Why?
READING SKILL – Develop opinions and provide justification for viewpoints.
(NC 6, 7 & 8)
Expected response:
Pupils' own responses