

# **Celebrating Black History Month**

## **Teaching Guide/Student Worksheets**

This guide supports the use of the profiles Celebrating Black History Month. It offers vocabulary words from the text and several short answer questions based on the content of each profile. In some cases, references to related websites are included with additional materials about the person or their pursuits. Lastly, the guide includes two or three activities per profile called “Newspaper Tie-ins.” These activities suggest how to bring the lessons of these historical figures into the present, to make their lives relevant and apply the lessons to today’s news. These graphic organizers were created for students in grades 4-8 and can be narrowed or expanded to accommodate the needs of each instructor’s class. Feel free to modify these activities or create your own.

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Newspaper In Education Program  
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# Common Core State Standards Chart

Lesson	Anchor Standards for Reading	Anchor Standards for Writing	Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening	Anchor Standards for Language	NYS Standards for Social Studies
<b>Crum</b>	<b>1, 2</b>	<b>2, 4, 9</b>	<b>1, 4</b>	<b>4, 6</b>	<b>2, 4</b>
<b>Fitzgerald</b>	<b>1, 4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Baldwin</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5, 7, 8</b>		<b>1, 4</b>	<b>3, 4</b>
<b>Davis</b>	<b>1, 3</b>	<b>1, 7, 9</b>		<b>1, 2</b>	<b>1, 2</b>

Teachers, use this chart as quick reference to find a lesson and the corresponding Common Core State Standards (CCSS). For more detailed information on the CCSS and the specific focus for instruction for each grade go online to <http://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-p-12-common-core-learning-standards> or <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>.

A complete set of documents supporting the New York State K-12 Social Studies Frameworks can be found at <https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-k-12-social-studies-framework>

For additional graphic organizers to use with Informational Texts including newspapers use the documents found in the Empire State [Information Fluency Continuum](#).

# Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: <http://www.cpalms.org>.

The reading material and activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards.

**Social Studies:** SS.A.1.1; SS.A.1.2; SS.A.1.3; SS.A.1.4; SS.A.1.5; SS.A.1.7; SS.A.1.18; SS.A.6.3; SS.A.8.1; SS.E.1.1 ; SS.E.2.4; SS.FL.1.1; SS.FL.1.5; SS.FL.1.7; SS.C.2.10

**Language Arts:** LAFS.L.1.1; LAFS.L.1.2; LAFS.L.2.3; LAFS.L.3.4; LAFS.L.3.5; LAFS.L.3.6; LAFS.RF.3.3; LAFS.RF.4.4; LAFS.RI.1.1; LAFS.RI.1.2; LAFS.RI.1.3; LAFS.RI.2.4; LAFS.RI.2.5; LAFS.RI.3.7; LAFS.RI.3.8; LAFS.SL.1.1; LAFS.SL.1.2; LAFS.SL.1.3; LAFS.SL.2.4; LAFS.W.1.1; LAFS.W.1.2; LAFS.W.2.4; LAFS.W.2.5; LAFS.W.2.6; LAFS.W.3.7; LAFS.W.3.8; LAFS.W.3.9

## Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and the Times to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. And since the mid-1970s, NIE has provided schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and our award-winning original curriculum, at no cost to teachers or schools.

In the Tampa Bay area each year, more than 5 million newspapers and electronic licenses are provided to teachers and students free of charge thanks to our generous individual, corporate and foundation sponsors. In addition to providing free supplemental materials to educators, NIE hosts free educator workshops and webinars. Our teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

For more information about NIE, visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie), email [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com) or call 800-333-7505, ext. 8138. Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## George Crum

**Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:**

clientele \_\_\_\_\_

delicacy \_\_\_\_\_

fowl \_\_\_\_\_

game \_\_\_\_\_

provoked \_\_\_\_\_

renowned \_\_\_\_\_

retrospect \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the profile of George Crum. Then answer the following questions.**

1. Name the four occupations George Crum had during his lifetime. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did George's father do for a living?  
a) He was a chef   b) He was a hunter   c) He was a jockey   d) All of these
3. Who taught George Crum to cook? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What invention is attributed to Mr. Crum? \_\_\_\_\_
5. About how old was George when he opened his own restaurant? And about how old was he when he died? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Find Saratoga Springs on a map or use an online mapping tool. About how far is Saratoga Springs from your school? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Newspaper Tie-ins:**

- Look over advertisements for restaurants in the newspaper. Pretend you're living in the 1860s and create an advertisement for Crum's restaurant in Saratoga Springs to persuade potential diners to try the new restaurant.
- Crum may have invented Saratoga Chips by accident. Look through several editions of the newspaper (print or online) for a story where the outcome was different than what the person or people involved originally intended. Select one. Was the outcome positive or negative? Discuss this as a class.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Ella Fitzgerald

**Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:**

ambition \_\_\_\_\_

amateur \_\_\_\_\_

triumphs \_\_\_\_\_

pigeonholed \_\_\_\_\_

ambassador \_\_\_\_\_

improvising \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the profile of Ella Fitzgerald. Then answer the following questions.**

1. How did Ella mother support herself and her daughter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Ella Fitzgerald really want to be? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Ella “discovered”? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What types of music did Ella sing during her long career? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How old was Ella when she died in 1996? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How many Grammy awards was Ella Fitzgerald honored with during her career? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Related Website:** Recordings of Ella Fitzgerald -

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=Ella+Fitzgerald](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Ella+Fitzgerald)

### **Newspaper Tie-ins:**

- Have the class read and study the format of musical reviews. After listening to recordings of Ella Fitzgerald have each write their own review of her singing.
- Find or create a comic character that would respond or move to a fast beat and one that would move to a slow beat. Design a rhythmic pattern for a cartoon strip. Have students match the pattern to the correct strip or character. Try to have them relate their creation back to Ella Fitzgerald and her singing in some way.
- Ella has been quoted as saying, “Just don’t give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don’t think you can go wrong.” Find an example in the newspaper (print or online) of someone who’s striving to live their dream. As a class, share your examples.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

An acrostic poem is a poem in which the initial letters of the lines, taken in order, spell a word or phrase. Each line should relate back to the central theme. In honor of Ella Fitzgerald and her quote about doing what you really want to do in life, create an acrostic poem using DREAM as your theme.

**D**

**R**

**E**

**A**

**M**

**Assessment:** Write a sentence or two about something you learned studying about Ella Fitzgerald.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## James Baldwin

**Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words and phrases:**

avid \_\_\_\_\_

aspiring \_\_\_\_\_

demoralized \_\_\_\_\_

eloquent \_\_\_\_\_

racial equality \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the profile of James Baldwin. Then answer the following questions.**

1. What two publishing jobs did James Baldwin have as a student? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. About how old was Baldwin when author Richard Wright helped him win financial support? What was the award, who awarded it and how much was it worth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did Baldwin go after his first novel was rejected? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What else happened to make Baldwin feel unable to successfully write? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. About how old was James Baldwin when his first novel was finally published? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Find Harlem on a map or use an online mapping tool. About how far is Harlem from your school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Newspaper Tie-in:**

- James Baldwin wrote about race relations and became known as a spokesman for racial equality in the Civil Rights era. Look through the newspaper for examples of people fighting for the equality of others. What group of people are they working for? How and why are they doing it? Compare this modern group with the black Americans during the 1960s. Use the following page to organize your writing.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>African Americans during the 1960s</b>	<b>Group from Today's News</b>
What is the problem?	What is the problem?
Who is trying to help?	Who is trying to help?
How are they trying to help?	How are they trying to help?
Why are they trying to help?	Why are they trying to help?
How are these two groups the same?	
How are they different?	

**Assessment question:** What was the most interesting thing you learned while doing this lesson?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Ernie Davis

**Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words and phrases:**

academics \_\_\_\_\_

alma mater \_\_\_\_\_

diagnosed \_\_\_\_\_

generation \_\_\_\_\_

milestones \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the Famous New Yorker profile of Ernie Davis. Then answer the following questions.**

1. What three sports did Ernie play in high school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What award did Davis earn as a college athlete? For which sport? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why didn't Ernie want to play for the Washington Redskins? What team was he traded to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. True or false: Ernie Davis never played professional football. \_\_\_\_\_
5. What illness did Ernie Davis die from? How old was he? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Find Elmira on a map or use an online mapping tool. About how far is Elmira from your school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Related Website:

[http://www.cclld.lib.ny.us/famouselmira/ed\\_sat\\_eve\\_post.htm](http://www.cclld.lib.ny.us/famouselmira/ed_sat_eve_post.htm) – A *Sports Illustrated* article by Ernie Davis about his life and struggles with his illness.

### Newspaper Tie-ins:

- Nicknames are fairly common in the sports world. Look through recent editions of newspaper sports sections and try to find as many nicknames as you can. Share them as a class. What do they say about the players or teams? What nicknames can you find in other sections of the newspaper?
- Look through the newspaper, in print or electronic, for news about professional or college football. What player today reminds you most of Ernie Davis? Why? Defend your answer.
- Ernie Davis looked for a college where he could excel as an athlete and gain a strong business education. Using the help wanted listings in the print newspaper or online, select a job you might like to have when you're an adult. Research what you would need to know or what skills you would need to have to get that job. Organize your "job search" in the chart on the next page.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Job description:**

**Why did you select this job?**

**What education/skills are necessary for this position?**

**Where could you get the required education/skills?**

**How long will it take to obtain these education/skills? Estimate how much this education will cost.**

**How does your “job preparation” compare to Ernie Davis’ choice to attend the Syracuse University?**

**Assessment question:** What the most difficult part of this learning activity?

## Series Exercises:

1. Select any two African Americans and compare and contrast their lives and accomplishments.
2. Create a crossword puzzle using key vocabulary words from each profile. Consider using the crossword puzzle student interactive tool available free online at [www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/crossword/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/crossword/)
3. Write an obituary notice for each.
4. Write a classified ad for each profile. The classified could be a help wanted ad, an item for sale ad, or perhaps a lost and found notice. Use your imagination and have fun!
5. Write a journal entry from each personality's perspective regarding the challenge(s) each faced during his/her lifetime.
6. Using various sources, including the Internet, try to find primary documents relating to each individual.
7. Some of these famous people's homes may now be museums or have been designated historical landmarks. Research these online. What more can you find out about any of African Americans that you didn't already know from his/her profile?
8. Check your library for an autobiography or biography about one of these people and read an extensive account of his/her life. Write a book report using appropriate organizational strategies and make an oral presentation to the class.

## **Answer Key:**

### **George Crum:**

1. hunter, fisherman, chef/cook, and hunting guide
2. c) He was a jockey
3. A French hunting companion and Pete Francis, an African-American chef
4. Saratoga chips or potato chips
5. He was about 38 years old when he opened his own restaurant. He was about 92 years old when he died.
6. (Answers will vary by location – a fast way to find an answer is by using [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or Google maps)

### **Ella Fitzgerald:**

1. She was a cook and a laundry manager.
2. A dancer
3. The Apollo Theater in Harlem
4. Big Band, Jazz and Contemporary Music (you might also accept “Scat” Singing)
5. 79 years old
6. 12 Grammy Awards

### **James Baldwin:**

1. editor of the student newspaper in junior high and literacy editor of the student magazine in high school
2. about 19 years old, Eugene F. Saxton Fellowship, Harper and Brothers, \$500
3. France
4. about 29 years old
5. (Answers will vary by location – a fast way to find an answer is by using [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or Google maps)

### **Ernie Davis:**

1. baseball, basketball and football
2. Heisman Trophy, college football
3. Davis didn't want to play for the Washington Redskins because he believed they were a racist team. He was traded to the Cleveland Browns.
4. True
5. acute monocytic leukemia
6. (Answers will vary by location – a fast way to find an answer is by using [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or Google maps)

### **Additional online resources:**

<http://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/index.html> - African American History Month resources created by government agencies including Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Park Service and more.

<http://new.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/black-history-month> - The Center for Civic Education - The School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program presents educators with lesson plans that explore the use of nonviolence in history, paying particular attention to the civil rights movement and African American history.

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm> - National Education Association, Black History Month website

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html> - Using Primary Resources Teacher's Guide and Analysis Tool from Library of Congress

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**A Study Guide\***

Working in groups of no more than five, choose and study carefully a newspaper story about someone or a group of people working to make your community a better place for everyone to live. Answer the questions below based on details from the chosen story.

**1. Remembering (retrieve)**

Who committed the action? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the action? \_\_\_\_\_

When did the action take place? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the action take place? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Understanding (summarize)**

Retell or give the main idea. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Applying (carry out)**

Why is (the specific event) \_\_\_\_\_ significant?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Analyzing (compare)**

How does (the problem in the story) \_\_\_\_\_ compare with another problem \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Evaluating (judge)**

Do you agree with a viewpoint offered by someone in the story or the opinion expressed by the person writing the opinion \_\_\_\_\_?

What do you think? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Creating (plan)**

Devise an action plan to solve the problem and present your plan to a group of students, parents, school and/or community officials? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(\*Bloom's Taxonomy revised)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Levels of Thinking and Reasoning\***

From your newspaper, choose a story about diversity in your community that interests and/or involves you and is likely to appeal to other students in your class. Ask a question on each level and have a classmate read the story and answer the questions. Also, ask for a critique of the questions.

<b>Headline:</b> _____ <b>Author:</b> _____ <b>Newspaper:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____
--

<b>Create</b>
---------------

<b>Evaluate</b>
-----------------

<b>Analyze</b>
----------------

<b>Apply</b>
--------------

<b>Understand</b>
-------------------

<b>Remember</b>
-----------------

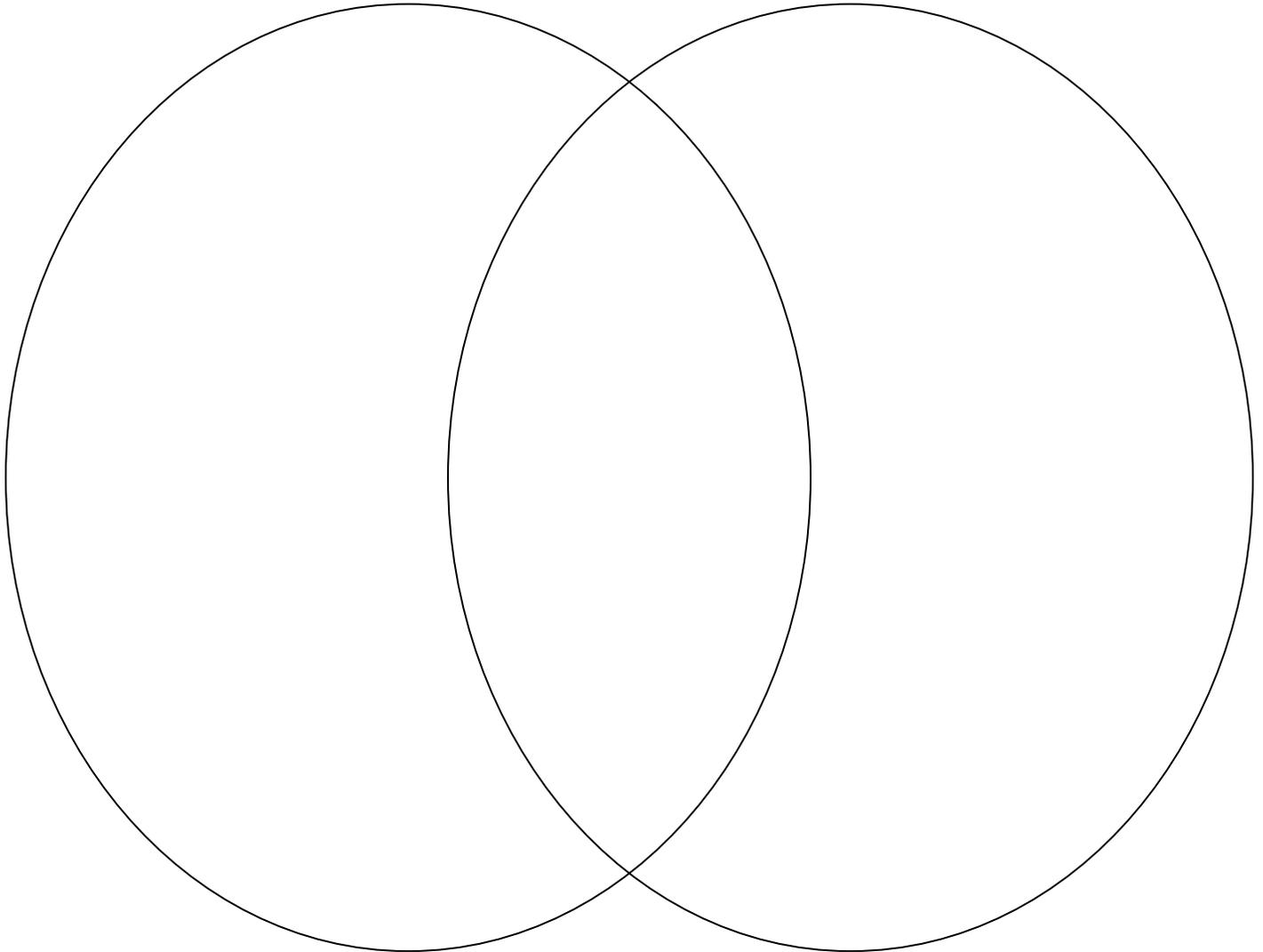
**Follow-up:** Did the story appeal to your classmate? Did your classmate offer complete answers to the questions? Did your classmate recommend any changes to the questions?

(\*Bloom's Taxonomy revised)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Venn Diagram**

**Directions:** Compare one person from the Celebrating Black History Month profiles with someone in the news who is working to improve the community.



**Follow-Up:** What character trait do they share?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**KLW Chart**

**Directions:** Before you read fill out the **KNOW** column with what you already know about the topic. As you read fill in what you've **LEARNED** in the center column. After you have finished reading fill in the **WANT** column with what you *want* to know more about.

<b>KNOW</b>	<b>LEARN</b>	<b>WANT TO KNOW</b>

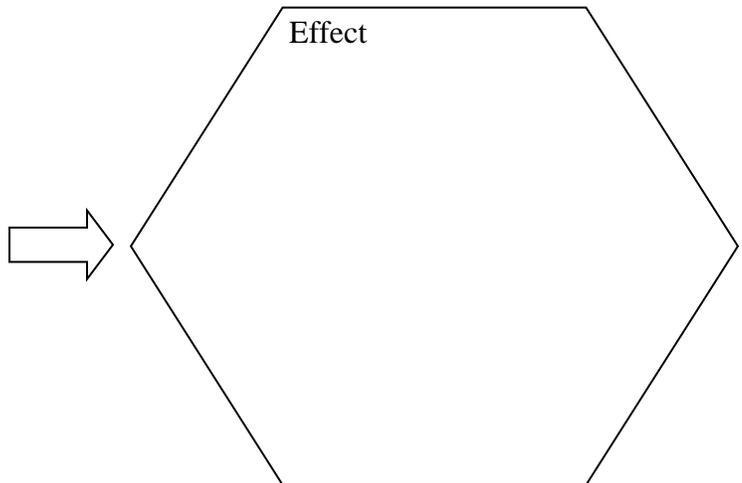
**Follow-Up:** Conduct research to answer your questions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

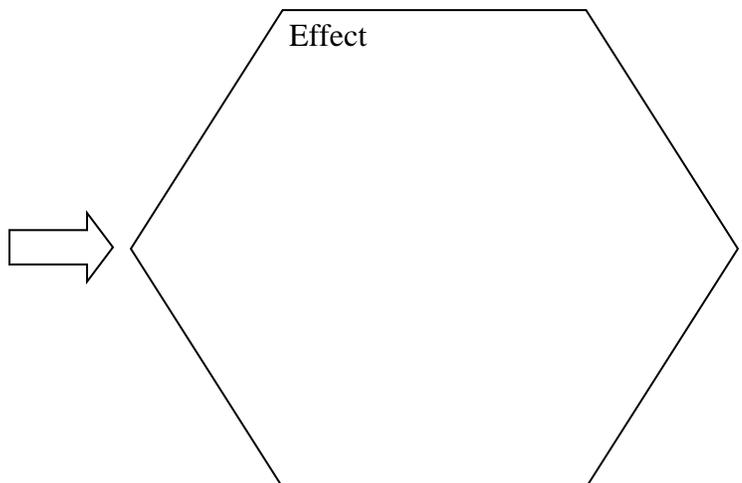
**Cause and Effect**

**Directions:** Select one of more news stories that focus on issues of equality and justice. Identify causes and effects.

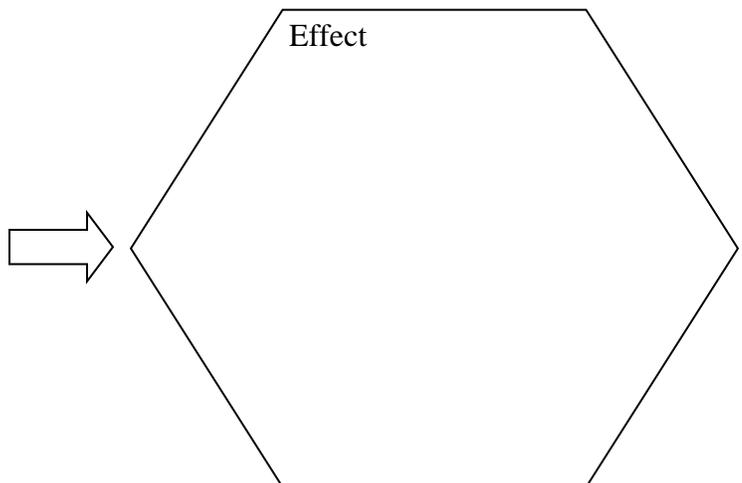
Cause



Cause



Cause



**Follow-Up:** Which effects represent positive and which, negative results, for the people involved?

## Tampa Bay Times activity: Do the research

Doing research is a great way to learn about a topic or person. The process of doing the research – finding credible websites, reading the information, looking at photos, and understanding the information – will increase your knowledge in a fun way. For this research assignment, you will take on the role of being a detective to learn more about a notable Floridian. The first step is to choose one of the notable Floridians listed and learn more about him or her. You can work by yourself or with a partner.

Cannonball Adderley  
Wally Amos  
Mary McLeod Bethune  
Robert Hayling  
Zora Neale Hurston  
Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr.  
James Weldon Johnson  
Sidney Poitier  
Philip Randolph  
Deion Sanders  
Augusta Savage  
Wesley Snipes

1. When you are doing research, it is important to use credible websites. Websites such as Wikipedia and personal blogs are not always credible since some of the information presented as fact may be opinion or plagiarized from another source. Be sure to keep a list of your sources.
2. Research the person you chose. Write down the important facts, including:
  - Who is this person?
  - What is his or her background?
  - Where was this person born and where did he or she live?
  - When did this person live?
  - Why is this person notable and/or important?
  - How is this person a role model?
3. Create your own set of lesson plans about the person you chose. Using one of the worksheets from this packet as a model, create your own vocabulary list, reading comprehension questions and newspaper tie-in activities.
4. Next, compare the person you chose to one of the other individuals you have read about: George Crum, James Baldwin, Ella Fitzgerald or Ernie Davis. Create a graphic organizer to show what you have learned (comparison chart, Venn diagram, KWL chart).
5. Create an oral presentation about what you have learned and discovered. Have the other students in the class complete your worksheets.



# Celebrating Black History Month



## George Crum

(1822 – 1914)



**George Speck Crum pictured with unknown woman. Image provided by the Saratoga Springs Historical Society.**

In his lifetime, George Crum was renowned as a skilled hunter, a successful businessman and a master chef to the nation's elite. He probably never imagined that he would be remembered as the inventor of one of America's most popular snack foods.

Crum was born George Speck in Ballston Spa sometime in 1822. His father, Abe Speck, was a mixed-race jockey who used "Crum" as his racing name. George's mother was Native American, and George was often described as "Indian" in appearance. By the 1850s, he had become an expert hunter and fisherman. He worked as a hunting guide for the growing tourist trade in the Adirondack region, and often cooked meals for camping tourists as well. He learned to cook from a French hunting companion and from Pete Francis, a successful African-American chef in Ballston Spa. Crum quickly gained a reputation for catching the best game and fish and cooking them better than anyone.

In 1853, Crum became the chef at Moon's Lake House on Saratoga Lake. He was praised for his preparation of fish and fowl dishes, but it was while preparing a side dish that Crum made culinary history by inventing "Saratoga chips" – today's potato chips.

Historians have shown that earlier cookbook writers had the basic idea for a potato chip, but America's love for the salty snack began with the widespread fame of Saratoga chips from Moon's Lake House. There are different stories of how Saratoga chips were born. In one version, Crum's sister and assistant-cook Kate accidentally dropped a thin potato slice into a pan of deep fat. In the more popular account, Crum himself was provoked by a diner's complaint that an order of French fries had been too thick, soggy and bland. He angrily prepared what the customer seemed to want: potatoes sliced as thinly as possible, cooked to a crisp and heavily salted. Trying one, Crum realized that his practical joke had turned out delicious. The customer agreed.

Crum's Saratoga chips soon became a house specialty at Moon's, whose wealthy clientele made them a fashionable snack. By the end of the 19th century, recipes for Saratoga chips or "Saratoga potatoes" were commonplace in American cookbooks. The chips were a popular side dish at Crum's own restaurant, which he opened in 1860. Crum kept the spring behind his farmhouse well stocked with trout and bass, and was nearly as famous for his "Saratoga bass" as for his potato chips. Presidents and millionaires dined at Crum's, but Crum always insisted that even the wealthiest diners had to wait their turn before being served. Many said they would wait all night for the privilege of enjoying his cuisine.

Mass-producing potato chips never occurred to Crum – the technology didn't exist until the 20th century. Nevertheless, George Crum was hailed as a success when he died in 1914. He had succeeded in one of the few trades that racial minorities in his time were allowed to compete in with whites. He would become an even greater success in retrospect once potato chips evolved from an elite delicacy to a great American snack for everyone.

*For more information about potatoes read the Smithsonian article, "How the Potato Changed the World" online at [www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-potato-changed-the-world-108470605/?no-ist](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-potato-changed-the-world-108470605/?no-ist).*

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## Celebrating Black History Month



# Ella Fitzgerald

(1917 – 1996)

A case of stage fright led to the start of Ella Fitzgerald's singing career. By the end of her career, she was praised worldwide as "the First Lady of American Song."

Shortly after she was born in Newport News, Virginia, on April 25, 1917, Ella Fitzgerald's parents separated. Ella's mother moved to Yonkers, where she worked as a cook and a laundry manager. For recreation, she listened to popular music on the radio while Ella sang and danced along.

Ella sang in her high school glee club, but actually wanted to be a dancer. Her first ambition was to perform in the amateur night contest at Harlem's famous Apollo Theater. When she got her chance, she froze on stage. Fearing to move a muscle, she chose to sing instead. To her surprise, she won the contest.

After more amateur night triumphs, professional musicians began to notice Ella Fitzgerald. She was offered a contract to sing on the radio, but when her mother died, the contract was withdrawn because the orphaned Ella was still a minor.

In 1935, Fitzgerald sang professionally for the first time at the Harlem Opera House. Soon afterward, Chick Webb, the leader of a popular "big band," hired her to perform as his regular vocalist at the Savoy Ballroom. He also became Ella's legal guardian until she came of age.

As Ella Fitzgerald sang on live radio broadcasts and records with his orchestra, Webb encouraged her creativity. In 1938, they co-wrote a song based on a childhood game Ella remembered. "*A-Tisket, A-Tasket*" became her first hit record and made her a star.

By 1939, when Chick Webb died, Ella Fitzgerald was famous and respected enough to take his place as bandleader. She toured the country until the band broke up during World War II, while continuing her recording career. Instead of being pigeonholed as a singer of novelty songs like "*A-Tisket, A-Tasket*," Fitzgerald studied the experimental sounds coming from younger jazz musicians. She redefined herself as an innovative "scat" singer in a vocal equivalent of the newer "bebop" style. In doing so, she earned new respect from fans and music critics alike.

After World War II, Ella Fitzgerald toured the world as an ambassador of American music with the Jazz at the Philharmonic troupe. In the 1950s, she redefined herself once more with a series of "Songbook" albums. The "Songbooks" established Fitzgerald as the ideal interpreter of George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and other great 20th century American songwriters. After years of improvising and experimenting, her singing now took on a timeless quality that remains popular today.

Ella Fitzgerald continued to tour the world and try new musical styles until illness and age slowed her down in the 1980s. She earned twelve Grammy awards during her recording career. The Society of Singers gave her their first lifetime achievement award, and named it the "Ella" in her honor. Beyond her death on June 15, 1996, Ella Fitzgerald is still identified with the highest standards of American popular song.



Photo courtesy of LegendsArchive.com

For more information about Ella Fitzgerald and her amazing career go to [www.ellafitzgerald.com](http://www.ellafitzgerald.com) or [www.ellafitzgeraldfoundation.org](http://www.ellafitzgeraldfoundation.org). This is one of a series of four Celebrating Black History Month profiles, written by Kevin Gilbert for the NYNPA - Newspaper In Education Program.

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## Celebrating Black History Month



# James Baldwin

(1924 – 1987)



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James Baldwin claimed that, as a writer, he spoke for himself instead of any group of people. In doing so, he became one of the most eloquent spokesmen for racial equality in the Civil Rights era.

His biological father wasn't around when James Arthur Jones was born in Harlem on August 2, 1924. His stepfather David Baldwin, whom he long assumed was his biological father, was a former Baptist preacher who didn't want his children to see movies or listen to jazz. James found refuge in books and became an avid reader. He attended Frederick Douglass Junior High School and became editor of its student newspaper. At DeWitt Clinton High, James became literary editor of its student magazine while preaching on Sundays at a local Pentecostal church. After graduating and giving up preaching, he

worked laying railroad track, meatpacking, and waiting tables in restaurants.

As an aspiring writer, Baldwin sought out black role models. Beauford Delaney, a painter who lived in Greenwich Village, was the first black artist Baldwin knew personally. Delaney gave Baldwin a feeling that a black artist could be defined by his art, not his race. Another role model was the best-selling novelist Richard Wright, who read Baldwin's fragment of a novel and encouraged him to finish and publish it.

In 1945, Wright helped Baldwin win a \$500 Eugene F. Saxton Fellowship from the Harper and Brothers publishing firm. It provided financial support while he completed a novel and wrote book reviews for literary and political magazines. But after Harper rejected the novel and a close friend committed suicide, a demoralized Baldwin felt that he couldn't develop further as a writer in America. In 1948 he moved to France, where Wright introduced him to leading artists and intellectuals. In another country, Baldwin felt a stronger sense of his own individual identity and the critical distance from America necessary to write honestly.

Baldwin finally published a novel in 1953. *Go Tell It On the Mountain* partly drew on Baldwin's childhood to tell a sensitive but critical story about religion in the black community. Many critics rank it among the 100 best American novels of the 20th century. Baldwin's essay collection *Notes of a Native Son* appeared in 1955. It proved him a master of non-fiction as well as fiction.

Even though he didn't consider his books "protest novels," Baldwin was seen as a spokesman for black Americans. He became best known during the 1960s for his controversial essays on race relations. He appeared on the cover of *Time magazine* when his book *The Fire Next Time* was published in 1963. As a novelist, Baldwin defied expectations and angered some readers by portraying homosexual characters in *Giovanni's Room* and *Another Country*. Baldwin never restricted himself to what seemed appropriate or politically correct; he believed in telling the truth about life as he saw it.

James Baldwin was a global citizen. He divided his time between book tours and teaching stints in the U.S., his home in France, and trips throughout the world. He died in St. Paul-de-Vence on December 1, 1987, but was buried in Hartsdale, New York. He was eventually honored with a postage stamp that symbolized his place in America's literary heritage.

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For more information, video and lesson plans about James Baldwin go to the New Hampshire Public Television, Knowledge Network website at <http://bit.ly/zQkux2>. This is one of a series of four Celebrating Black History Month profiles, written by Kevin Gilbert for the NYNPA - Newspaper In Education Program. All rights reserved 2016.

## Celebrating Black History Month



# Ernie Davis

(1939 — 1963)

If Ernie Davis's life seems like a tragedy of promise unfulfilled, it's because the "Elmira Express" had already done so much to fulfill his potential and break down barriers as an athlete and a man before disease struck him down.

Ernest Davis was born in New Salem, Pennsylvania, on December 14, 1939. He lived with his grandparents in Uniontown until age 11, when he moved to Elmira, New York to live with his mother. Ernie became a three-sport star at the Elmira Free Academy, leading the Blue Devils to two league championships in football.

As he neared graduation, Davis was eyed by Major League baseball scouts, while his friends expected him to get a basketball scholarship for college. Ernie himself was interested in academics as well as athletics. In his era an athlete couldn't expect to live on the money made from sports for the rest of his life. The football star Jim Brown recommended his own alma mater, Syracuse University, as a school that could prepare Davis for both football and business careers.

At Syracuse, Davis wore number 44, the same number Jim Brown wore. In three years on the varsity squad, Davis broke Brown's school records for rushing and all-purpose yards, yards per carry, touchdowns and points scored. The "Express" also reached two milestones denied Brown. On New Year's Day, 1960, Davis led the Orangemen to victory over the University of Texas in the Cotton Bowl Classic. He starred on offense and defense, intercepting a pass as well as scoring, rushing and receiving touchdowns. The win earned Syracuse its first-ever championship in Division I-A football, as determined by coaches and sportswriters. Two years later, Davis became the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy for most outstanding player in college football.

Following the 1961 college season, Davis was the first African-American to be drafted by the Washington Redskins, the last whites-only team in the National Football League. Davis didn't want to play for a presumably racist team, so the Redskins traded him to the Cleveland Browns, where he would become Jim Brown's teammate.

Before joining the Browns for the 1962 season, Davis was named to the College All-Star Team that played annually against the NFL championship team. Davis missed that game due to an illness diagnosed as acute monocytic leukemia, an incurable blood-cell disease. After intense treatments, doctors declared the disease in remission and there was hope that Davis could return to football for the 1963 NFL season. His struggle with the disease made him an even bigger hero with sports fans and Americans in general. But shortly after Davis wrote about his fight for *The Saturday Evening Post*, his health turned for the worse again. Within days of returning to the hospital, he died on May 18, 1963.

The Cleveland Browns retired Davis's number 45, even though he had never played a professional football game. The Elmira Free Academy eventually became the Ernie Davis Middle School. The 2008 movie *The Express* told his story to a new generation. If Ernie Davis made history in life, his tragic fate has made him an American legend.



**Ernie Davis holding his 1961 Heisman trophy. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [reproduction number LC-USZ62-115343]**